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P H E D O R A;

OR,

The Forest of Gynski.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY CHARLTON.

" To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
" To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
" To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot;
" In all, let Nature never be forgot.
" But treat the Goddess like a modest fair,
" Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare."

POPE.

VOL. III.

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P H E D O R A.

C H A P. I.

“ Would I had never married ; for now, methinks,

“ I’ve bound up for myself a weight of cares ;

“ And how the burthen will be borne, none knows.”

“ IF Cassimer wishes to see me !” exclaimed Phedora mentally, after twice reading the letter : “ it is doubtful then, even to his mother, if he wishes to see me ! perhaps he will not wish it—well, I shall be then spared a great deal of pain, and the Countess will be satisfied.” And she now experienced an emotion of displeasure towards Madame Rectizi, which she had never before allowed herself to indulge.

The Baroness returned a written answer to the letter of her friend, the import of which Phedora felt an earnest desire to be acquainted with: but her lively hostess was silent respecting it, and she had not sufficient courage, even to give the most distant hint, of the anxious curiosity that occupied her mind.

She passed every hour, until Cassimir was expected, in an inquietude that would not admit of rest, and it then increased to an agitation so powerful and oppressive, that the Baroness, in compassion to her feelings, left her to herself, that she might be spared the painful effort of endeavouring to control them. She heard, at length, the voice of Rectzizi, for which she had been sometime listening in breathless silence, and distinguished the sound of the door of Madame Hartsen's usual sitting room shutting after him.

“Now then,” exclaimed she, “he is explaining to her the purport of this visit, which the Countess has so unexpectedly admitted

admitted of: he knows I am in the house, and, if he wishes to see me, I am allowed to appear before him."

In a quarter of an hour she again heard Rectzizi's voice uttering a farewell compliment to the Baroness: her heart fluttered, and it sunk below its usual region, when, instead of beholding him enter the apartment where she sat, she heard his sledge drive from the door. Her soul sickened, and she repeated mechanically, "he does not wish to see me!" Madame Hartsen considerately allowed her time to recover from her emotion, before she required her company: but she then saw, with a compassion she was obliged to repress, that Phedora had been weeping with bitterness, and suffered much from her useless efforts to subdue her sorrow.

When Ivan came, she hastily declared her inability to see him, and rushing out of the room, flew to her chamber, where she shut herself in. The Baroness judged very properly,

perly, that this was not a moment propitious to young Leuhaupt, and resolutely withstood his request, to send to Phedora, to petition admittance to her presence for two minutes. She tutored him good humouredly upon his impetuosity, and then more seriously persuaded him to try the effect of a gentler and more silent homage.

“ Countess Rectzizi,” added she, “ has informed me, as you may suppose, of your attachment to this lovely girl; do not let it hurry you into solicitations too often repeated: her disposition is mild and amiable; but these are precisely the description of tempers that are ruffled with the least impunity.”

“ And do you affirm,” asked Ivan, eagerly, “ that I might then succeed?”

“ So because, from mere charity,” returned the Baroness, “ I try to put you into the right path when I see you bewildered, you insist upon making me responsible, that it will lead you directly to your object!—no, my good friend, observe that I merely direct
you

you to the best of my judgment, and answer for nothing further."

Ivan looked rather disappointed, and finding that he could not prevail with her to send his importunate entreaty to Phedora, departed with the double vexation of not being able to see her, and believing that she was indisposed.

In the latter supposition he was not much mistaken; for the half suppressed uneasiness that agitated her spirits, produced a corresponding disorder of frame, and it was some days before she was able to quit her chamber. The Baroness, during this time, evinced a tenderness of disposition Phedora had supposed incompatible with the extreme vivacity of her temper; and this proof of her excellence of heart, endeared her inexpressibly to the grateful object of her cares.

Madame Rectzizi hearing of the situation of Phedora from Ivan, whose fears and anxiety magnified the evil, instantly flew to

the habitation of her friend, with an uneasy consciousness she could scarcely endure. The pale and melancholy countenance of the invalid shocked her, and those tears that dropt unfelt and unheeded from her eyes, on beholding the Countess, appeared to reproach her with cruelty. Madame Rectzizi had, however, the consolation of knowing that the Baroness attended her interesting charge with the utmost care, and that she expressed an attachment for her, such as she said herself, she could not have imagined it possible for an intimacy of so short a date to have produced.

The Countess, on leaving the house, promised, unsolicited, that she would return the next day, accompanied by Ulmeri, who longed, she said, to embrace her young friend. Phedora was delighted with this indulgence, for, next to beholding Cassimir, she was most pleased with the idea of seeing his sister. She scarcely hoped for an opportunity of disclosing to her the shock she had sustained, from the neglect of Rectzizi to use
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the permission he must have received; for though she imagined she had crushed every wish of being united to him, the supposition of being again, and forever perhaps, thought of with contempt and aversion, was too cruel to be sustained with any fortitude.

As she had imagined, the Countess did not leave her with Ulmeri a moment; but she experienced a more lively pleasure than of late had visited her heart, from the indulgence of beholding her, and being assured, that the affection of her young friend was like her own, undiminished. The time appeared to glide rapidly away, as each cast on the other those expressive glances they both longed to translate into more intelligible language.

At length Madame Rectzizi reminded her daughter, that they must return to Moscow before sun-set. Ulmeri sighed, and Phedora re-echoed it as they rose to leave her. She kissed a hand of each, and faintly asked when she should again be so honoured.

“ I fear,” returned the Countess, “ it will be some time before I can again see you: the Count sets off to-morrow for Smolensko, on affairs of importance: Ulmeri and myself accompany him, but we return to Moscow almost immediately, and I shall not fail to inform myself of your health, my dear child, the first hour in which we are re-established in our own house.”

Phedora expressed her gratitude for a condescension so unmerited; though she could not help internally observing, that the Countess evaded her question: her eyes followed them wistfully to the sledge, and when it was out of sight, she could not refrain from weeping, from an apprehension that a long period would elapse, before she should again behold poor Ulmeri.

The Baroness gently rallied her prompt tears, and when she had succeeded in making them disappear, good humouredly exerted herself to amuse the mind of Phedora, and
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detach her thoughts from the object that too much occupied them. Insensibly she gained her attention, and having once fixed it, soon led her to converse upon diffusive subjects.

By degrees Phedora dropped the settled expression of chagrin that had marked her countenance, and, though far from being happy, she soon learned to think of Cassimir Rectzizi as of one whom fate had not destined for her; though accident had so often and so singularly placed him across her path in life. She became composed, at times even cheerful, and in her turn charmed the Baroness, by a display of sentiments and ideas above her years; and, as Madame Hartsen imagined, above the opportunities of cultivation that could possibly have offered.

The Countess had represented to her, Mr. Leuhaupt as the best of human creatures, with a heart of primitive excellence, and manners coevally simple; and she had no idea that the man who could fix his residence

in an humble village, careless of the busy scenes he left behind, and, content to be unknown, should possess a mind that soared far above the situation he filled, a soundness of judgment tempered by experience, a fund of natural sense and acquired knowledge, and a brilliancy of imagination capable of diffusing itself in wit, but that it was intrenched and guided by reason and reflection.—So little apt are we all to conceive a union of acquirements and inherent talents, with simple untutored goodness of nature !

Phedora and her lively hostess felt each day a warmer sentiment of esteem for each other. The vivacity of the Baroness never degenerated into levity or folly; and the calm sweetness of Phedora was far removed from the flat insipidity that ever presents to the satiated eye and ear, the same uniformity of dullness.

Ivan was again admitted to her presence; but the hints Madame Hartsen had thrown out,

out, operated so much upon his mind, that he no longer tormented Phedora with his usual merciless and unceasing importunity: the change benefitted himself as well as her, for he had now leisure to display those amiable qualities his impetuosity so much obscured. The Baroness became greatly interested in his favour, and as Phedora had voluntarily opened her heart to her, she ventured to use her influence in his behalf, in arguments at once zealous and founded in reason.

“ With Cassimir Rectzizi, my dear young friend,” said she, “ you could not have been happy, had he persevered in wishing to make you his wife: his father and his mother, whom he so fondly loves, opposing the choice he made, not from your deficiency of fortune, but the equally accidental circumstance of not being descended from people with a noisy name. Pardon me that I mention to you so freely those absurd impediments to the happiness of many honest folks: you have luckily a soul that needs not a letter of credit from

your great grand-father, to excite admiration and respect.—I know not, indeed, if your great granddaughter should be a cross, crooked ideot, whether she would not be justified in endeavouring to persuade the world if she could, to think otherwise, by getting your perfections handed down to her upon record. But let me return to the subject from which I am rambling. The Countess is an excellent woman, but she inherits from her parents a little of the Polish pride, which now and then peeps up amongst her many virtues. I know something of her family: perhaps you have heard that they mean to make Cassimir their heir, and, procure him, with a brilliant alliance, one of the most respected titles in Poland, when Augustus shall be re-established on the throne, an event which we daily look for. Think then, my dear Phedora, what a focus of acrimony and resentment any person must become, however amiable and deserving, who should presume to overturn such splendid dreams of magnificence and grandeur?"

Phedora

Phedora could not refuse her conviction to this argument: she wished to change the subject of discourse; yet, before it dropped, she could not forbear inquiring if Cassimir were acquainted with this plan.

“ I have not heard that part of the story,” replied the Baroness, smiling archly; “ suppose, however, I were to tell you that he did, is there not another question, now ready to succeed the first ?”

Phedora blushed, and was silent.

“ I am at this moment much inclined,” pursued the Baroness, “ to set before those charming eyes, by way of contra-distinction, all the comforts, the satisfactions, the pleasing prospects, of which your encouragement of my delightful hot-brained Ivan, affords so fair a perspective. Suppose yourself united to him—nay, I insist upon your supposing it for five minutes—and the good Count and Countess, eager to throw into your cup of felicity

felicity, those little glittering, paltry, but essential drops that trickle sparingly through the fingers of fortune, when she holds her hand over modest merit; but which she often pours, with unsparing prodigality, on the heads of fools, and wretches who deserve to be stretched upon the wheel round which she whirls. The beneficence of the Rectzizi's, you have then the power of dispensing to those good creatures —."

" Ah, Madam !" interrupted Phedora, " do not go on : how painful is it to have one's reason convinced, whilst the heart struggles to oppose conviction !"

" And do not you, my young friend," said Madame Hartsen, " allow yourself to be governed by a weakness thus acknowledged and condemned."

She then suffered the argument to drop, and soon after left Phedora to muse over it; not without some expectation that it would have the effect she wished.

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The time which the Countess had announced for the return of her family to Moscow, was now elapsed, and no tidings had yet been received of them. Madame Hartsen became uneasy, and Phedora observing it, instantly caught the alarm: at length, however, intelligence reached them, through young Leuhaupt, that the Count had been unexpectedly detained at Smolensko, and was then proceeding on his way to Poland, instead of returning, as he imagined he should have done, to Moscow.

Ivan had gathered this account from a confidential servant of the family, who had accompanied them in their journey, and had been sent back to take proper care of the Russian effects thus hastily abandoned, and bring the intelligence to the friends of the Count and Countess.

Madame Hartsen immediately sent to Cassimir, who was still at Moscow with his regiment, for a confirmation of this news,
and

and her messenger returned with a packet of letters from the Countess and Ulmeri, to Phedora, and the friend upon whose protection she was now so entirely thrown.

Reetzizi wrote a few words to the Baroness, importing, that his duty prevented him from presenting to her in person, the letters from his mother and sister, with which her servant was charged.

“ You will doubtless learn,” added he, “ from my mother, that she has ordered a sum of rubles to be deposited with me, as the portion of Phedora Rubenski, when she marries Lieutenant Leuhaupt: I entreat you to inform her, that whenever it is claimed, either by herself, or Mr. Leuhaupt, I shall very readily resign it.”

The Baroness did not think proper to show this billet to her young companion, and put it into her pocket without any comment, to read the letter of Madame Reetzizi: it mentioned,

tioned, with regret, the abruptness of her unexpected departure from the Russian dominions, as it precluded any possibility of her taking leave of two persons so dear to her. The immediate necessity of the Count's presence in Poland, from some important intimations he had received at Smolensko, she repeated as the cause of this unforeseen measure.

The Countess then spoke of the situation of Phedora, thus inevitably committed to her sole protection.

“ I make not any apologies,” she wrote, “ for what circumstances have compelled me to do: the goodness and generosity of your heart would be outraged by it; and I must still hope that she will give poor Ivan a title to the guardianship I have thus unintentionally forced upon you. At any rate the good Leuhaupt will soon be at Moscow, and you can then consult with him as to the disposal of your ward, should any event induce
you

you, in despite of your own inclinations, to relinquish her. Cassimir has, in charge for her, five hundred rubles, which I spoke of to him, as a marriage portion: but they are her's without conditions, and I beg of you, as circumstances occur, to make use of them for her."

The letters of Ulmeri and her mother to Phedora, were expressive of friendship and regret at their unlooked-for separation, which the Countess explained the necessity of in general terms.

"I have confided you," concluded Madame Rectzizi, "to the care of Baroness Hartsen; and I believe you love her too well to repine much at this delegation."

When Phedora had put away her letters, the Baroness embraced her kindly.

"Shall we ever again," cried she, "complain of the caprices of fortune, since she has thus

thus so good-humouredly thrown two people in the way of each other, with sentiments and natures not uncongenial, however their tempers may differ, and with so much inclination to be reciprocally pleased: at least it is so with me, and if you can make the same declaration with equal truth, you will not quarrel with the occasion that calls our friends into Poland."

Phedora felt all the delicacy of this speech, with an emotion of gratitude and admiration she could not control; but before she could express them, Madame Hartsen had vanished, nor would she, when they again met, hear a word of acknowledgment.

A week now glided by in composure, undisturbed but by a few sallies of impatience on the part of Ivan, who began to lose his temper at the continued indifference of Phedora. The Baroness, however, terrified him into more patience, by reminding him that indifference might not be so inimical to his
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his hopes as aversion and confirmed disgust: this hint again calmed him, and another week passed on more smoothly.

At the end of that time, Madame Hartfen, rather sooner than she had expected, heard from her husband, that a few days would bring him to Moscow, where he desired she would meet him, as it was uncertain how long he should remain there, and it would be very inconvenient to him to reside at the hut in which she sequestered herself.

“ This is indeed a sovereign mandate,” said the Baroness, with easy indifference, “ but I am very much in doubt whether I shall obey it.”

She then communicated the intelligence to Phedora, who felt distressed from an apprehension, that the irresolution of Madame Hartfen originated in her: but on discovering her uneasiness, she immediately removed it, by assurances that it was ill founded.

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After a little hesitation, however, the Baroness determined to remove to Moscow, in obedience to the wish of her husband, and left to Phedora the choice of remaining at the hut, as the Baron stiled her house, or of accompanying her; though she intimated at the same time, that she should be most pleased not to lose her society.

Phedora earnestly entreated Madame Hartfen to decide for her, as her own convenience directed.

“ I should have thought,” replied she, smiling, “ you might have discovered before this, that my convenience generally gives way to the gratification of my inclinations and whims: at present, however, they all agree pretty well, and if you have not any objection to urge against it, we will go together to Moscow.”

Phedora readily assented, for she had not been much delighted with the idea that
immediately

immediately occurred to her, of receiving the visits of Ivan, in the absence of her lively friend, which she was sensible he would not be prevailed upon to forego.

The next day he was made acquainted with their intended change of residence, and was pleased with the opportunities it promised, of being more frequently with Phedora; yet he felt an emotion of jealousy on reflecting, that at Moscow, Reetzizi would have a greater chance of seeing her.

The Baroness quitted her habitation at the time mentioned by her husband for his arrival, and removed to the house of a russ friend, which he had marked out to her as his place of residence at Moscow. The owner of the mansion was fortunately absent, and Madame Hartsen rejoicing at the circumstance, established herself in as much comfort as her own ingenuity, with some little assistance she obtained from her russ servants, joined to the indefatigable efforts of Phedora, could

could produce. Nearly a week passed, however, before the Baron appeared; and in this time Phedora had leisure to reflect, with considerable uneasiness, upon the interruption his presence was likely to give to the calm into which the amiable temper of Madame Hartsen had soothed her mind into.

At length he arrived, accompanied by two officers of rank; the one a ruf, the other of his own country. Phedora trembled, and the Baroness laughed at the boisterous stretch of voice with which he made the house echo, before he had entirely stepped over the first threshold: it was some minutes after this opening, 'ere he entered the apartment, in which Madame Hartsen very quietly awaited him; where the first object that struck his observation, whilst he was disposing of some portable baggage that encumbered his hands, was the figure of Phedora; and one more lovely the eyes of Baron Hartsen had never encountered. His astonishment at a vision so unexpected, suspended the action in which he

he was engaged, and an enormous pair of boots he was carefully depositing near the stove, in order to thaw some part of the frozen greese that cased them and rendered their consistency rather too rigid, no longer occupied his whole attention.

The Baroness, whom he had not yet noticed, placed herself, with a sudden motion, before the blushing Phedora; and saluting him with an expressive nod of recognition, presented a countenance of such irresistible irony, that he felt compleatly disconcerted; but recollected himself almost instantly, so far as to repair his negligent omission, and then enquired by what favourable turn of fortune she was so agreeably accompanied.

“ This young lady, my good friend,” replied Madame Hartsen, “ is a ward of the Count and Countess Rectzizi, who were a little while back very unexpectedly recalled to Poland, and made me a present of this sweet girl, until their return to Moscow ?

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The Baron expressed much pleasure at so charming an acquisition: but happening to mention the word *guest* in the course of his compliment, he recollected those he had brought with him, and thought proper to ask his servants what had become of them. The rufs, it appeared, had walked out, after seeing his baggage properly disposed of; and the German had taken possession of the most commodious apartment, which happened unfortunately to be that of Madame Hartsen, where he was quietly resigning himself to repose, after a journey of three days and nights, in which the travellers had met with a few misadventures, that had nearly annihilated the Baron and his boots: of these, the most lamentable was the breaking down of the sledge, which occasioned the loss of several bottles of excellent brandy with which it was stored, and compelled the trio of friends to walk nearly twenty versts over the frozen snow.

The Baronefs learning the ufurpation of her unknown gueft, remonftrated with her husband upon the injuflice of it; but as he appeared unwilling to rectify the error of his companion, ſhe was obliged to undertake the task herſelf, which ſhe executed with all the activity and diſpatch ſo natural to her; and the ſomniferous German was diſlodged in a ſhorter time than he had taken to eſtabliſh himſelf in his diſputed quarters.

“How is this, Major?” cried Baron Hartſen, when he made his appearance: “is it poſſible that you, of all men, ſhould be ſo imprudent as to march, with your eyes ſhut, into an unknown territory, and take a poſt you could not maintain, though you were without the means of an honourable retreat?”

The poor Major, extremely diſcompoſed at the event of the buſineſs, made an aukward apology to Madame Hartſen, importing that he was entirely ignorant of the pleaſure that awaited

awaited him of beholding her, and that he imagined the house, before the arrival of his friends and himself, had been merely occupied by servants. The Baroness readily admitted the excuse, and to prevent any further mistake, assigned to each of her husband's companions the best accommodations the house of a Russ afforded, without intrenching, however, upon those she had been at the trouble of securing for herself and Phedora.

The Baron had scarcely thrown off his travelling dress, and experienced the comforts of warmth and rest, before he eagerly called for some case bottles of a liqueur his favourite servant had in charge, which he pronounced divine: a sentence the German and the Russian who had been introduced, eagerly and equally confirmed. Madame Hartsen very easily imagining how this concurrent approbation would end, took Phedora by the hand, and immediately withdrew; though a sort of remonstrance from her husband, the beginning only of which she

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heard,

heard, seemed designed to detain them : the Baroness continued to retreat, however, and having taken refuge in her own apartment, exclaimed to Phedora,

“ Have I not reason, think you, to regret my retirement ? I have hitherto denied myself the pleasure of presenting you with a portrait of my husband ; but it appears that he does not feel averse from favouring you with a very exact representation of himself ; he is hastening to give the last touches to the picture, and in about two hours I judge, or three at most, Baron Hartsen will produce himself highly coloured and compleatly finished.”

The Baroness had begun with more gravity than she usually betrayed ; but as she ended her speech with her wonted vivacity, Phedora did not repress the smile that hovered round her lips.

“ I shall get back to my hut,” added Madame Hartsen, after a pause, “ as soon

as

as possible: I am not likely to be molested there; and I think I may venture to pronounce, that young as you are, after you have passed two or three days in the society we shall be blessed with here, you will not repine at the seclusion."

"How can I even allow of the word, Madam," said Phedora, affectionately, "whilst I preserve your company and friendship, which sooth, delight and expand my mind: when my evil destiny separates me from you, I shall indeed feel secluded, but not till then."

"I hope the period will be a distant one," replied the Baronefs, "unless indeed—I wonder much that we have not seen Ivan to-day!"

"He is probably acquainted with the arrival of the Baron," returned Phedora, "and thinks it an improper time to importune you with his presence."

"Certainly his presence," cried the Baronefs ironically, "might have interrupted the tenderness of our meeting, and awakened

to jealousy the acute feelings of this delicate Hartsen. Tell me, my dear Phedora," added she, laughing, "what do you think of—of his boots?—Hark! as I hope for eternal peace, the enchanting trio are singing! That horrible composition of uncouth sounds, that represents to my imagination the hideous and frightful wailing of an old bear driven out to sea upon a piece of ice, is, I suppose, the warbling of the accomplished Russ."

Phedora had been for a moment rather alarmed at this uncommon noise, and now could not help being extremely entertained with the interpretation and simile of the lively Madame Hartsen, who amused herself and her companion the whole evening, with a string of comments, that sometimes obliquely glanced at the august Baron himself, and wounded him, without mercy, in the persons of his friends.

Phedora had seen enough to justify the sentiments of the Baroness for her husband;
yet

yet though she was compelled to laugh at the comic form in which they had been betrayed to her, she felt hurt that a confidence of such importance, half tacit as it was, should have been made with so little caution, or even have been made at all, by one for whom her partiality and affection had hitherto daily increased with the entire assent of her judgment.

The Baroness saw the pensive reserve that gradually stole over her features, and was not long in discovering the cause of it.

“ My good Phedora,” said she, with less gaiety of aspect, “ you are at this moment, I perceive, arraigning and condemning me, for what is, in fact, the effect of my greatest merit: my affections, my resentments, my wishes, and my disappointments, like my temper, are lively and ardent; to subjugate all these, as in turns they have prevailed, is a task I have, with difficulty, accomplished. Strange though it may seem to you, I once
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experienced the most enthusiastic fondness for the man, who met me a few hours since with so perfect an apathy: when I first knew him, a good figure and the bloom of youth recommended him to the eye; a pleasing frankness, liberality of sentiment, generosity of disposition, and sweetness of temper, were his passports to my heart: I could not then foresee that his own would be in riper years so unguardedly open to the torrent of degenerate folly that now pervades it.

“ Until he entered into the service of the Russian Monarch, I retained some little influence over him; but from the moment he attracted the attention of the Czar, and became one of the favoured companions of his riotous hours; I lost my last hold upon him, and unwillingly gave him up to the brutal degeneracy which he quickly contracted with these vile Russians. The disturbances in Poland prevented me from residing there, which I had much wished; and thus compelled to take up my abode in these

these dominions, I found unoccupied the little mansion, where I became acquainted with your story, and with those gentle and womanly virtues, for which I love and esteem you. The Baron calls my habitation a hut, and sneers at the confinement of my tastes; but I believe he finds it extremely convenient that I should not extend them beyond what they are.

“ I have now learnt to review my destiny with calmness and resignation: I no longer torment my husband with remonstrances, which would only augment the evil; and as I cannot obtain the happiness my youthful imagination had depicted, I have industriously searched for a substitute, and found one in the powers of my own mind, which led me, by the most painful efforts, to expel those stormy passions, that tyrannising by turns, filled it with anarchy and misery. Amidst the honours of such a triumph, do not, my dear Phedora, consider too seriously the weakness that still impels me, at intervals, to

satirize the faults and follies which have wrecked the flattering visions and gay hopes of my early years. It is not to every one, believe me, I would thus explain my past, or my present sentiments: but young as you are, I have not failed to discern in you a justness of idea and strength of judgment I much admire, and which have, indeed, extorted from me this long apology. I would not chuse to suffer in your opinion materially, from the gaiety I have this evening indulged; for, my dear Phedora, I love, and honour as well as love you; when therefore you unwillingly observe in me any too-apparent levity of carriage towards Baron Hartsen, call to my justification, in your well regulated mind, the little explanation and detail I have now given you, and think, for a moment, what would be the keenness of your own sensations, were you to experience a disappointment so bitter, from the object of your tenderest love, with whom you had entrusted every hope of happiness; and think not too hardly of me, that I have converted them

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to subjects of irony, half serious and half jesting."

Every vestige of cheerfulness fled from the countenance of the Baroness, as she pronounced this last sentence, and Phedora, unable to speak from a variety of emotions, could only, by the most expressive looks and caresses, explain the commiseration that produced her tears. The noisy revels of the Baron and his companion still continued, but Madame Hartsen, unusually grave, no longer heard or remarked them; and Phedora, who reproached herself with having given birth to unpleasing reflections, yet not knowing what to say upon a subject so delicate, was distressed and uneasy.

The Baroness, at length, perceived her inquietude, and gently pressing her hand,

"Be not discomposed," said she, "by what you have just heard: my transient gloom will soon dissipate, and our friendship

be the better cemented by the entire confidence we place in each other."

They soon after parted for the night, and on the next morning the Baroness met her young companion with smiles; though Phedora looked in vain for the unfeigned and exhilarating vivacity that was wont to sparkle in her countenance: she appeared determined, however, to be cheerful, and Phedora exerted herself to second the effort.

The Baron was already gone out with the Major, and the Russ alone remained to interrupt the female tête à tête. He was named Jalgourouki, claimed the title of Prince, was of a commanding height, and tolerably well formed; but his movements were insupportably awkward, and tediously slow, except when it was his turn to seize the goblet, filled with that animating liquor, so grateful to a Russ palate. As he entered the apartment where Madame Hartsen sat, she cast on Phedora a look so provokingly comic, and that
marked

marked so pointedly the uncouth motions of her stupid-looking visitor, that she was scarcely able to resist it sufficiently to restrain her laughter: but the fear of affronting a friend of the Baron, checked her mirth, and she resolved not to glance her eyes towards him again, that she might not be tempted to commit such an offence.

The solemn Jalgourouki not having the same reason to refrain from gazing at Phedora, cast upon her every other minute, such approving regards, that the Baronefs, who perceived them, began to entertain hopes of extracting amusement from his infant partiality.

The entrance of Ivan, at length interrupted the mute tribute of applause which the Rus seemed otherwise inclined to extend beyond the patience of Phedora, who, though she could not guess how his eyes were employed, was meditating a retreat to her own apartment,

apartment, to finish reading a Polish book of poems Madame Hartsen had lent to her.

The pleasure of young Leuhaupt, on again beholding her, after an interval of two days, was rather damp't on observing the presence of Jalgourouki, whom he had mistaken for the Baron, till Madame Hartsen undeceived him, by announcing the name and title of the Russ. His apprehensive jealousy immediately suggested to him, that the Prince would become a rival, supported by the recommendation of his German friend: to inflict therefore in his turn some of the pain he felt, Ivan took the hand of Phedora, and to engage her to listen with seeming interest, to what he uttered with a low voice, he spoke of his father and Catherine, whom he told her he hourly expected at Moscow. The expedient succeeded to his wish, for she instantly gave him her whole attention, and when he ceased, inquired, with earnestness, when he had heard this delightful news: a question which rather embarrassed him, because he had not

5 learnt,

learnt, in fact, a syllable of the near approach he so confidently talked of, or indeed received any intelligence since Count Rectzizi had set off for Poland.

Phedora misconstruing the reason of his hesitation, instantly conceived an idea that they were already arrived, and that Ivan was endeavouring to break the news to her: transported with the supposition, she forgot the presence of Jalgourouki, and cried out,

“ Ah, my dear Baroness, they are come—they are certainly come !”

“ Who are come ?” demanded Madame Hartfen, in the utmost surprise.

“ Tell me, Ivan,” exclaimed Phedora, “ is it not so—are they not already in Moscow ?”

“ Does she speak of your father and sister,” said the Baroness, hastily : “ why not conduct them hither ? fly, good Leuhaupt, and bring them to us.”

Ivan,

Ivan, confounded at the alarm he had so causelessly given, began with a confused air, to undeceive each party; and Phedora very much disappointed and vexed, could hardly forbear reproaching him with having raised her hopes, merely to crush them so cruelly; for the questions of the Baroness forced him to acknowledge that he was ignorant of the progress the beloved travellers had made, since the last information the Count had obtained. Madame Hartfen chid his unthinking giddiness, and Phedora looked extremely grave during the rest of his visit.

The Baroness saw that he was disappointed at not receiving an invitation to return, when his military duty was over; but she forebore to give him one, because she was unwilling to expose him to the danger of falling into the habits of the Baron, who passed his hours, after having bustled through the business of the morning, in a regular and uninterrupted scene of intoxication and riot. Madame Hartfen could not therefore but feel extremely
reluctant,

reluctant, to suffer a youth of Ivan Leuhaupt's disposition, to become a companion in her husband's revelry.

When he was gone, the Russ, who had hitherto remained very quiet, inquired to what regiment he belonged, and of what nation he was. The Baroness answered these questions, and the conversation immediately dropt; for the Prince having nothing further to demand, resumed his silence.

Madame Harten grew excessively tired of this scene, and secretly planned to avoid it in future, by breakfasting with Phedora in her own apartment, inexorably refusing admittance to any one, excepting only Ivan, of whose pretensions she meant to inform the Baron.

His entrance, at length, banished the stupid composure of Jalgourouki, who was boisterously rallied for preferring the vicinity of the stove, to the sledge: he defended himself

self with all the address he was master of, and then inquired what was become of their friend the Major.

“He has encountered,” replied the Baron, “an old acquaintance, whom he has not seen many years: a German officer in our service; and they have renewed friendship, so Bindorf dines with him. I met,” continued he, turning to the Baroness, “about an hour since, the son of Count Rectzizi: he is a handsome young fellow; but I could not prevail with him to accompany me home, to supply Bindorf’s place this afternoon.”

The countenance of Phedora changed more than once during this sentence, and the name of Rectzizi thus unexpectedly pronounced, was to her nerves like the shock of electricity.

“I very much respect the family of the Count,” replied Madame Hartsen: “Cap-
tain

tain Rectzizi is well acquainted with this; if he comes voluntarily to me, I shall be happy to see him, but I detest the idea of compelling any person to give me their society, when their inclinations are absent: let me entreat you, therefore, not to importune him further."

When dinner was ended, the Baroness again withdrew, notwithstanding the loud expostulations of her husband: he would not however, have much regretted her absence, had she not been accompanied by Phedora, whose beauty excited all the admiration and attention he could spare from the divine *liqueur* he failed not to recommend to her notice. She was not Russian enough to allow herself to judge of its excellence, but by the commendation both Jalgourouki and the Baron bestowed upon it, which Madame Hartsen very readily concluded to be just, since it actually inspired the Russ with an animated compliment to the bright eyes of her pretty favourite.

" My

"My dear Phedora," cried she, when they were alone, "I foresee that Ivan must give up those slender hopes you have allowed him to retain, since the magnificent Prince Jalgourouki condescends to regard you with an eye of admiration."

"Dear Madam," returned Phedora, "permit me to say once more, that it gives me inexpressible pain to observe the continued attentions of Ivan, which I can never reward as he wishes. As for the Prince," added she, smiling, "I believe I must not presume to credit such a flattering suggestion; for I think it would require even more than your penetration, to discover any thing in his eye but the materials that compose it."

"I have before now cautioned you," said the Baroness with an affected gravity, "not to make such violently, disclaiming speeches; a person looks so excessively foolish when they condescend to retract, that I would really advise you to consider well, before you plunge into the dilemma."

Phedora,

Phedora laughing, thanked her for her considerate advice, and promised to remember it with effect.

"I am still sighing," resumed Madame Hartsen, after a short silence, "to return to my retreat; nor do I think that you, my sweet friend, would be sorry to accompany me thither."

Phedora warmly asserted that she should be delighted to do so.

"My prediction was well founded then," continued she; "a day or two hence I will venture to propose it to the Baron; if in the interim, your bright eyes have not distanced the French brandy in the imagination of this august trio, we shall not have more of their society than our patience can digest."

Phedora, charmed with the proposition, ardently wished the request were already made and complied with.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

“ ——— I had much rather see
“ A crested dragon, or a basilisk :
“ Both are less poison to my eyes.——”
“ ——— Look fresh and merrily,
“ Let not our looks put on our purposes.”

PHEDORA's attachment to the Baroness increased, as every hour produced instances and proofs of kindness almost maternal: her ready hand supplied with liberality every want of Phedora, even before she herself perceived it; but since the little narrative of Madame Hartsen, she received her gifts with pain, from a recollection of the hint she had thrown out, that the Baron would not, or could not, spare from his income, more than sufficed for her very moderate establishment in his absence.

The

The Baronefs perceived her uneasinefs, and faw that a delicate fear of offending, alone prevented her from rejecting her pre-fents: it immediately occurred to her, to remove the fcruples of her little Rubenski, by mentioning the fum in the hands of Caffimir, as having been deftined for her ufe as occafions arofe. Phedora wept at this new inftance of beneficence; but it relieved her mind from a very uneasy fenfation, and Madame Hartfen promifed to have recourfe to the deposit, provided the fubject were no more renewed: ſhe had not, however, any intention of breaking into the portion the Countefs had affigned her; but the benevolence of the Baronefs was far from being oftentatious, and ſhe wifhed not to raife in the object obliged any humiliating acknowledgment of pecuniary benefits.

Two days paſt exactly like the firſt, except that the Baron favoured his Lady and Phedora with more of his company in the morning, the only time indeed, he was in a ſituation

tion to appear before them ; and at length he accidentally encountered Ivan, as he came as usual to pass an hour with Phedora. The Baroness had not yet found an opportunity to inform her husband of his pretensions to her young friend, and her wishes to forward his interest with her; she introduced him, however, as having been recommended to her by the Rectzizi family, and the Baron, eager to enlarge his evening party, instantly invited him to dine on that, and every succeeding day, whilst he remained at Moscow.

Young Leuhaupt, charmed with an hospitality he had been hitherto much mortified at not having experienced from his friend the Baroness, thought proper however, to consult her countenance, to learn how far his acceptance of it would meet her approbation. He saw that she was displeased with her husband's frank invitation, and feeling excessively discomposed at a coldness so unaccountable, in one who had ever professed for him an interest warm and unsolicited, he declined

declined the honour the Baron had been so ready to propose; and was still more piqued to find, that she made no effort to alter his determination.

He took his leave almost immediately, and the poor Baron, with some surprise, very gravely inquired what austerity appeared in his aspect and manner, that the young men styled him thus, like a bug-bear.

"Oh what a subject of alarm have you ingeniously found out!" exclaimed Madame Hartsen, laughing. "What mortal could be clever enough to discover the smallest semblance of austerity in that face or figure? Discard your terrors, my good friend; no intelligent being will ever mistake you for a philosopher."

"I would not wish it," returned he, rather disconcerted.

"You are right," cried the Baroness, "always confine your wishes within the bounds of possibility."

He could not fail to observe the ironical expression with which she spoke, and withdrew abruptly, to avoid any further sarcasm, which he could not hear with apathy in the presence of Phedora.

“What are you so deeply studying, my fair Rubenski?” asked the Baroness, when they were alone.

“I am recollecting, Madam,” returned she, “with a presumptuous motive I confess, the confidential detail with which you honoured me.”

“I understand you: but cannot you guess what called forth an asperity I do not very often indulge? I trembled for young Leuhaupt: in such company as he would have met here, seduced by example, incited by absurd ridicule, he might have imbibed a custom that reduces man to a level with beasts, and tinctures every action and pursuit with imbecile brutality.”

“Ah, madam!” said Phedora, “you must be sensible that his is the very character

to be easily seduced: his self-aborrence, his repentance would at first be sincere and energetic; but still led on by custom, by example, by opportunity, his intervals of resolution and penitence would become less and less frequent, and he would then form the misery of all who were attached to him."

The Baroness, who had studied the turn of Ivan's mind, could not deny but that the supposition was well founded; but unwilling to confess it, and still more to admit the evident inference of this remark, she evaded the acknowledgment of her conviction, by affirming, that she believed the empire of Phedora over his heart was such, that she could model his conduct as she pleased.

"But do you think, my dear Baroness," cried she, "that the warm attachment he now professes, would exist as long as I do?"

"Come, come," replied Madame Hartsen, "we have not at present time for argument; let us adjourn to dinner."

Phedora silently complied, and followed her to the room where the Baron and his friends were assembled: she cast around a timid look, and saw, in deep conversation with Bindorf, the well-remembered countenance of Colonel Rimbach. The blood forsook her cheeks, at an object so feared and abhorred, and catching the hand of the Baroness, she uttered a faint scream of surprise and terror: the sound of it drew the attention of Rimbach towards her, and he started at the recognition.

“ Phedora Rubenski!” exclaimed he: “ whence came she?”

“ Oh dearest Madam!” said Phedora, “ take me away; let me not behold that man, who caused the death of Mrs. Leuhaupt, and deprived me of her last blessing.”

“ How is this?” cried the Baron, warmly.

“ Phedora,” said Rimbach, very much disconcerted, “ you have mistaken me: what I did was for the preservation of your friends, not to destroy them; and when you fled

fled me so strangely on the day they left Dorpt——”

“ Barbarous man !” interrupted she :
“ dear Baronefs, fuffer me to go away !”

“ You fhall retire if you chufe it, and I will accompany you,” faid Madame Hartfen ; who immediately conducted her to her apartment, where Phedora implored her protection, from the wretch who had fo vilely perfecuted the good and unoffending Leuhaupts.

“ Do not doubt it for a minute,” returned the Baronefs, warmly : “ I fee very plainly that this Rimbach is a villain, from the dark expreffion of guilt that overfpread his afpect, in fpite of his hypocrify.”

“ It was he,” refumed Phedora, “ who tore Ivan from his poor mother’s arms ; who dragged the worthy family into banifhment ; who infulted me with his unprincipled love, and oppreffed them openly with threats and outrage, becaufe they would not abandon the virtue their own precepts and example had implanted in my mind. It was he ——”

“Compose yourself, my sweet girl,” interrupted Madame Hartfen, “he can no longer injure you or them: and his presence under the roof I inhabit, shall no more give you uneasiness.”

“Ah, Madam,” you are all benevolence; but his appearance has given me already a thousand terrors. I tremble lest he should impede Mr. Leuhaupt’s journey to Moscow—lest he encounter Ivan, who would, at every hazard, take the vengeance he has so often vowed—lest some of the wretches who serve him, should fix their basilisk eyes upon me, and take me, I know not how, from your protection, as they removed me from that of Mr. Leuhaupt.”

“Dispel these fears,” said the Baroness, “with me you shall be safe. Rimbach cannot, I think, be informed of the recall of the Leuhaupt’s, and I will concert means to prevent Ivan from meeting him.”

These assurances calmed the vague terrors of Phedora in some degree, and the soothing kindness

kindness of the Baroness, who did not quit her the rest of the day, restored the quiet of her mind.

When they left the eating room, Bindorf instantly called upon his friend for an explanation of those circumstances that appeared so unfavourable to him from the broken exclamations of his fair accuser: and he had the art so to palliate his views, his conduct, and the effects they had produced, that he was acquitted but of a few admissible designs of gallantry, except in the mind of the Baron, who fancied he saw evident signs of a duplicity he abhorred, in the well-glossed tale of Colonel Rimbach.

Early the next morning, the Baroness corroborated his suspicions, by informing him of the injurious treatment Ivan had received at his hands, and of his infamous design to deprive Phedora of her friends, that she might be wholly in his power: she then represented the inevitable consequence of a

meeting between young Leuhaupt and Rimbach, and proposed to the Baron that she should retire with Phedora to her own habitation, both to prevent the encounter she dreaded, and that her favourite might no more be shocked with the sight of a man who had sought to injure her so grossly.

The Baron was extremely averse from this expedient, and offered to intimate to Bindorf, without hesitation, his dislike to receive in future the visits of the Colonel.

“ That would be,” replied Madame Hartfen, “ to draw upon yourself the enmity of both these men, without any actual necessity for it. The former friendship of young Leuhaupt for our little Rubenski, is now a more tender sentiment: what his success will be I know not; he has however in his favour, the interest of the Rectzizi family; and since this charming girl has been with me, he has been accustomed to see her daily: permit me then to take her to my
retreat,

retreat, where he will have it in his power to pass an hour or two with her as usual, without the danger of meeting this vile Rimbach, who will most likely be often in the society of Major Bindorf."

The Baron at length consented to the plan, secretly resolving however, to oblige his wife with longer and more frequent visits, than he imagined he should have been inclined to have honoured her with at her rustic habitation: but notwithstanding his admiration of Phedo when he heard the wrongs Ivan had endured, and the merit which had elevated him above his misfortunes, he became warmly interested in his cause, and determined to serve him both in his fortune and his love.

Madame Hartfen lost not a moment in quitting Moscow, and sent to Ivan's lodgings to inform him of her movements, at the same time preventing him from returning

to the Baron's, where he was likely to see or hear of Rimbach.

Surprised and delighted with their sudden removal to the country, he immediately followed them thither, and having saluted the Baroness with more coldness than was natural to him, he inquired of Phedora why she had so hastily left Moscow.

"My little Rubenski," replied the Baroness, not allowing her time to answer, "was indisposed; I was not very well myself, and as the air of this place is very pure, we have run away from our companions at Moscow, to immure ourselves here at the peril of an eternal dull female tête à tête."

"The peril," returned Ivan, "is not very great; but if it were, Phedora would brave it to fly from those who adore her."

"That is true," cried Madame Hartsen, who felt herself inclined to punish him for this inuendo; "she has flown from the enamoured Jalgourouki, who actually began to make bright

bright speeches : and even now, if she could be persuaded to afford him a little encouragement, I really think she might inspire him with such brilliant sentiments, as would astonish all Moscow."

Ivan was sensible that the Baroness merely jested with him ; yet her recent coolness in not seconding the hospitality of the Baron, had left a jealousy upon his mind ; and she had now chosen a subject to sport with, upon which he could not endure the slightest intimation : his countenance changed and a hasty answer rose to his lips ; he repress it however, but he had lost his temper, and the silent gravity of Phedora, for which he could not account, heightened his ill humour.

Madame Harten enjoyed, for a few moments, the commotion she had raised ; but at length perceiving that he was really unhappy, she extended her hand to him.

“ I will now apologize to you,” said she, “ for the conduct that so much offended you yesterday. Do not ever suffer yourself to believe, my good Ivan, that whilst I receive you with a smiling countenance, your interest is lessened with me. I had a reason (oblige me so far as to suppose it was a good one) for what in your mutinous heart you termed caprice and unkindness. I did not wish you to dine with us yesterday, it is true, but you shall dine with us to day.—Observe that smile Phedora! It was not you, but I who inspired it.”

Ivan, entirely subdued by her good humoured condescension, and charmed with the prospect of spending so many hours with Phedora, was all animation and gaiety. In the course of the day he recounted to the Baroness the exploits of his early years, when his lovely Rubenski was at once his companion, his advocate, his monitress, and sometimes his nurse.

Madame

Madame Hartsen was delighted with the narrative, which was told with infinite vivacity: but when, by accident, he mentioned the name of his mother, and annexed to it some action of tenderness, Phedora, whose heart was much softened by the recollection of those days of delight and peace, burst into tears, and checked in a moment the volubility of young Leuhaupt. He kissed her hand with gratitude for this mark of affection to the memory of his deceased parent, and no longer able to command his voice, gazed silently at her, until her emotion subsided, secretly reflecting with pleasure, how much the attachment she felt for Catherine and his father, was in favour of his hopes.

It was late before he left her, and he had to travel several versts, without one chearful sun-beam to meliorate the severity of the piercing cold: but his heart was elated, and he flew gaily over the frozen plain, without feeling its chilling influence.

The

The following day gave evident signs of the sudden approach of spring; the sun no longer gilded the snowy summits of the houses, and the sky before so clear, was hung with clouds that discharged themselves in rain. The Baroness rejoiced at the prospect of summer, so grateful to the inhabitants of northern regions; but Phedora had travelled enough to reflect, that the breaking up of the ice would impede the progress of the Leuhaupts; and if they were not near Moscow, they might yet be detained a month upon the road, or perhaps longer, and be subject to the most distressing inconveniencies and hardships, from want of money or interest to procure many of the comforts so necessary even to their existence. Her heart bled at this painful surmise, and Madame Hartsen soon shared in the anxiety it occasioned: yet she encouraged Phedora to hope the best, and promised to engage the Baron in the welfare of the worthy travellers.

Whilst

Whilst she was speaking to this effect, the Baron appeared, accompanied by Major Bindorf, for whom he claimed admittance, as Ambassador from the exiled Rimbach. Phedora shuddered at the name, but the Baronefs reassured her, and curious to learn the commission with which the Colonel had charged his friend, she gave him permission to make it known.

Bindorf was eager to exculpate him in the opinion of Madame Hartfen, from the suspicions which the conduct and subsequent communications of Phedora must necessarily have given her, and entreated on the part of Colonel Rimbach, that the Baronefs would allow him to attend her on the following morning, in order to explain to her charming young friend in her presence, those circumstances which had unhappily given her so unjust a prejudice against him.

Phedora instantly and warmly refused her assent to this proposition: but the Baronefs,
after

after a short pause, consented, on her part, to oblige him; and Bindorf imagining he had gained a great point by the partial success of his embassy, overwhelmed her with acknowledgments for her condescension, and returned immediately to Moscow, to relieve the anxiety of his friend, which he pronounced to be very serious.

When he was gone, Madame Hartsen gave way to a fit of mirth that suddenly seized her, to the surprise, and indeed mortification of Phedora, who had not expected that she would have complied with the request of the vile Rimbach, whilst she could not but retain yet fresh in her memory, every circumstance of his treachery and outrage. The Baron likewise gazed at her for an explanation of her gaiety, and when she had allowed them both a few minutes of conjecture, she gave it with her usual vivacity.

“ I shall want your assistance,” she cried,
“ to execute a little project I have conceived,

to

to punish—not the cruelty and wickedness of this man, they merit something more—but his abominable temerity in hoping to blind us to them, and make us his dupes. Lift up that pretty brow Phedora, and listen to my plan. As for you, Baron, I expect you will fall into it with your usual grace. Rimbach will not miss his appointment assuredly, and we must detain him till after sunset; I shall then rely upon you and Ivan, whom I must tutor, to throw a few obstacles in his retreat, to make him remember the day he undertook so boldly to impose upon two simple and credulous women, the most bare-faced and atrocious vice, for a conduct harmless at least, if not meritorious.”

“ Ah, Madam!” exclaimed Phedora, “ do not venture to acquaint Ivan with the vicinity of Colonel Rimbach, lest he should suffer his indignation to exceed the bounds of punishment you propose, even if he does not insist upon taking it entirely into his own hands.”

“ Why

“ Why will you thus terrify yourself,” asked the Baroness; “ I certainly intend to fetter his vengeance with a few preliminary vows and promises.”

The Baron declared his readiness to second her scheme, and avowed his belief in, and abhorrence of the villainy of Rimbach, from having seen him in close conference with one of the greatest scoundrels in the Russian dominions.

The image of Michaelhoff immediately occurred to Phedora, who in the utmost agitation, repeated his name to the Baron, and inquired if her surmise was just. He acknowledged that the man was so called, and demanded in some surprise, how she had guessed it.

“ From all that their united machinations have made me suffer,” returned she: “ this Michaelhoff was his principal agent in Livonia.”

“ What

"What is your plan?" asked the Baron, hastily, "I will execute it, if it cost me my life!"

"I have no intention of making it so expensive to you," cried Madame Hartsen: It is this: as we are tolerably certain the present atmosphere will last some days at least, the twilight tomorrow evening will of course be considerably obscured; all I require of you, is to procure me a pretty little gentle descent, to be dug in that part of the road that winds between the high bank of the Moscowa, and the tall fence about two versts from hence.—I mean just such a descent as will safely lodge his sledge and himself for a few hours, and I leave it to your ingenuity to find him amusement during that interval."

The Baron considered for a few seconds, and then striking his hands together with energy, swore that he had digested an excellent plan upon this rough draught.

In

In a few minutes Ivan joined the party, and was received by Baron Hartfen with a degree of approbation and friendship that infinitely delighted him. The Baroness observing the complacency of his countenance, to the consternation of Phedora, immediately began to open her design, by endeavouring to procure from him a promise to listen with patience to a little detail she meant to give him upon that condition; and that he would engage to follow implicitly the advice that would succeed it. Ivan cast his eyes on Phedora during this exhortation, and plainly discerned her uneasiness: he knew not what to conjecture, and his imagination instantly raised up a thousand chimeras, which the smiling countenance of the Baroness as instantly dispelled. That the detail and promise alluded to, concerned Phedora, he had little doubt: he therefore hesitated, and in a tremulous voice, demanded the Baroness to explain herself further.

“ No,”

"No," cried she, laughing, "I expect your immediate compliance, and a generous reliance upon my friendship, which is too sincere to extort from you any concession inimical to your happiness."

"Indeed I believe it," replied Ivan.

"Well then," resumed she, "give me upon your honour the promises I demand, and let the Baron and Phedora attest them."

He obeyed, and then eagerly claimed an explanation: but when he heard that Rimbach was at Moscow, so immediately within the reach of the vengeance he burned to take; the first storm of awakened passion defied the expostulation of the Baron and Phedora; and even the appeal of Madame Hartsen to his promised docility, was unattended to and unheard. At length, however, when his rage began to subside into a calmer inveteracy, he was compelled to acknowledge that his honour was pledged to obey the dictates of the Baroness; and she immediately made known to him her design, and the concurrence

concurrence of her husband to render it successful. Ivan claimed the privilege of being a party in the execution of it, and his demand was accorded, upon conditions which aimed at preserving the life of the Colonel, by protecting him from too severe a punishment.

The Baron and young Leuhaupt then consulted together for a few moments, and agreed to reconnoitre the destined spot, without losing any time. Phedora, in the interim, could not divest herself of the fears that tormented her, lest Ivan, hurried away by the impetuosity of his nature, should forget every stipulation, and take a most fatal and dangerous revenge. The Baroness endeavoured in vain to sooth her anxiety; but it increased yet more, when the Baron returned unaccompanied; nor could his protestations of the calm state of Ivan's mind, relieve her terrors.

The

The rapidity of the thaw, which still increased, assisted their plan by softening the ground: Ivan had returned to Moscow, to procure a party of his own men to march early in the morning to the habitation of Madame Hartsen, and receive their instructions (for so it had been planned) from the Baron himself, who was likewise to send his confidential servant to Moscow, for the implements and regalia they would have occasion for. So eager was young Leuhaupt to execute his assigned share in the project, that he had scarcely room in his mind, even for the long-cherished image of Phedora: and the Baron, almost equally interested in the event, flew about with astonishing alacrity, and absolutely forgot his French brandy.

The morning dawn beheld him already risen from his bed, and busily occupied in instructing the soldiers, who arrived very punctually; and to enforce the more ready execution of his commands, they were
accompanied

accompanied by a distribution of a can of spirits.

The Baroness now demanded a more circumstantial knowledge of the plot; but he merely assured her it was a good one, and that she should receive an excellent account of the Colonel, provided she could contrive to detain him until twilight came on: of this she desired him not to entertain a doubt, and reminded him, with an expressive smile, of the attractions of Phedora. The Baron turned hastily from the piercing eyes of his lady, which rather incommoded him, and almost instantly quitted the room.

Colonel Rimbach appeared at an early hour, and as the Baroness could not prevail with Phedora to see him till her presence was absolutely necessary, she received him alone. He looked round after he had paid his compliments, for the immediate object of his visit; and Madame Hartsen then informed him, that she could not employ her influence
with

with her young friend, until he had convinced her, that she had unintentionally injured him, in her opinion of the motives by which his conduct had been actuated in Livonia. Rim-
bach in consequence of this hint, began his justification.

Of the transaction respecting Ivan Leu-
haupt he denied any knowledge, until it was too late to serve him; and then he said, the contumacious behaviour of the young man would have called for the severest punishment, had not the high respect he himself entertained for the family, intervened to screen him from it. The Colonel then pathetically stated the danger of remaining in a village nearly deserted, liable to the ravages and lawless outrages of the Calmucks and Cossacks in the Russian service, who were not to be deterred from plundering and maltreating all who possessed no means of defence.

The Baroness now felt extremely inclined to smile, but she checked herself and he

continued. " From a motive of compassion, and knowing the obstinate resolution of Mr. Leuhaupt on this point, I exerted the power I happily possess, of removing him and his family to Dorpt. After the cruel decree, which I had not the power of foreseeing, I would still have secured them from its effects, but that on discovering those sentiments I am proud to avow for the lovely Phedora, this mistaken family thought proper to tax them with dishonour, and remove her suddenly from my sight. This conduct irritated the delicacy of my love, which could not brook a misconstruction so barbarously unjust, and awakened the most horrible apprehensions, that the fair Rubenski thus rudely torn from me, would be dragged into the shocking banishment for which nature was so far from intending her; and I required her at their hands perhaps too harshly, but without that success, the hope of which had alone urged me to employ threats I never meant to fulfil. I learnt afterwards, that the Leuhaupts had consented to resign her to a young

young officer in the troops appointed to guard the exiles in their route: probably they thought it would be more for their benefit to secure his protection and friendship than to preserve mine, which they imagined could no longer be of any service to them: he was however, equally disappointed with myself; for she fled us both, and my researches for her were invariably unfortunate. The unexpected meeting at Moscow would have overwhelmed me with joy, had I not found her so cruelly prejudiced against me by those Leuhaupts: but I trust, charming Baroness, your discernment has beheld in my narrative the real colours in which my conduct ought to be placed, and that you will represent it to Phedora in the same view."

"Believe me I will," returned Madame Hartsen, with energy: it is impossible for the blindest and most imbecile not to discover the exact truth throughout your relation of this affair. I will go and prepare my

young friend to listen to you with gentleness and patience; and if from any remaining prejudice, or little obstinacy of opinion, she should refuse for the present the reconciliation you require, rely upon my cares to soften her resentment the next time you honour me with your company, by painting to her your intermediate sufferings."

The Baroness then, with an arch smile she could no longer restrain, left him to the most pleasing reflections. This is the woman, thought he, I originally wished to be about her: how different from the prudent sententious Mrs. Leuhaupt! my explanation would not, I fear, have passed current there.

Madame Hartfen found Phedora half dead with terror and agitation: she had beheld as the servant of the detested Rimbach, the villain Michaelhoff, who under pretext of attending his master, had taken the opportunity of surveying the premises, and reconnoitring the number of domestics. She communicated

municated this to the Baroness, who was charmed with the intelligence, as it prognosticated to the subordinate wretch a share in the premeditated punishment of his principal. She related to Phedora in a few words the well-contrived narrative of Rimbach, and repeating to her his insinuations against the worthy protectors of her youth, exhorted her not to suffer him to escape the destiny he so well merited, by refusing to rein-in her aversion and horror for a short time, that he might not think of leaving them till the Baron and Ivan were prepared for his return.

Phedora still trembled however, and felt a reluctance almost unconquerable to appear before Rimbach, until Madame Hartsen reminded her, that if young Leuhaupt were now to be deprived of the species of revenge he had been soothed into taking, he might seek it in a way that would involve his family and his friends in the bitterest affliction.

This hint recalled the courage of Phedora; and lest it should again subside, she immediately followed the Baroness to the apartment where the Colonel awaited them. He displayed a lively emotion of joy on witnessing the success of Madame Hartsen's representations; and she, who could now watch his countenance almost wholly unobserved, saw in it a dark expression of triumph, which justified the idea she had instantly conceived, when Phedora mentioned that Michaelhoff had accompanied his master. She then almost regretted that she had restrained the excess of Ivan's rage, and hoped it would yet fall heavy upon the heads of the miscreants to whom she could no longer in imagination extend any mercy.

As the Baroness had guessed, Phedora could not be induced by the submission and protestations of Rimbach, to declare that she had discarded her resentment and judged better of his past conduct: it was a duplicity and falshood with which no circumstance could persuade

persuade her to fally her lips; but the precaution of her quick-sighted friend had guarded against the effect of this delicacy, and the Colonel was far from despairing to obtain the concession at a future period.

Madame Hartfen easily prevailed with him to stay and partake her dinner; and then certain that no ordinary event could defeat their plan, her good humour increased to a degree that spread a congenial sun-shine over the features of her guest, who augured the most flattering effects from the complacent temper of her mind, and the extreme docility with which she had credited him.

As they entered the eating room, the Baron joined them with a countenance that marked to his fair confederates that all was in the proper train. His own servant had been charged to reduce Michaelhoff to a situation in which his natural discernment would be of very little use to him, and the Baron presented himself to Rimbach, with a determined

mined resolution to obscure his judgment and comprehension most effectually.

The Colonel fell into the snare with an excellent grace : the ladies withdrew, and in about two hours after, heard Baron Hartsen and his guest call in a very exalted voice, for Michaelhoff and the sledge : it was not without some difficulty that they were both produced, and Rimbach then drove away at a most furious pace.

The Baroness sent after him her audible wishes for a pleasant journey, though he was too great a distance to thank her for this additional mark of favour : but Phedora could not yet quell her apprehensions that this adventure so sportively begun should end more seriously : she wished it were over, that Rimbach, much as she abhorred him, should escape without any material injury, and Ivan and the Baron return from the mischievous frolick undiscovered and unhurt. Madame Hartsen rallied her excessive anxiety, but it
could

could not be conquered, and she spent several hours in all the misery of fear and suspense, and those variety of evils an agitated mind suggests, whilst it is yet ignorant of the ill it has most to dread. The rain poured at intervals in torrents, and the heaviest clouds darkened the hemisphere; and when in defiance of the cold and wet, Phedora opened a window to listen if aught could be heard, no sound struck her ear, but the hollow whistling of the wind, and the loud and frequent cracking of the ice that covered the Moscowa, whose stream wound its course within an hundred paces of the house.

C H A P. III.

——“ He parted frowning from me :

“ So looks the chafed Lion

“ Upon the daring Huntsman.——”

SEVERAL hours thus past by, which the Baronefs endeavoured in vain to shorten by the most cheerful fallies. At length she distinguished the voice of the Baron, and the next moment he entered the room, accompanied by Ivan: they were in high spirits, and Madame Hartfen would scarcely permit them to throw off the furs which had sheltered them from the rain, before she impatiently required an account of the expedition. Ivan was too much intoxicated with delight, to comply with her request in a manner to be understood, and the Baron insisted vehemently

mently that he would be indulged with some refreshment before he uttered a syllable.

She was obliged to humour this whim ere her curiosity could be gratified; and then in a manner that was meant to annex importance to the narrative, the Baron, after having swallowed a few glasses, began by an acknowledgment to Madame Hartsen, that she had laid the ground-work of the plan which had been so cleverly executed.

“Leuhaupt,” continued he, “sent a sufficient number of his men, to dig in a couple of hours, a tolerable spacious pit in that part of the road you indicated. This was performed under my direction before dinner, and my lieutenant arriving at the spot just as the work was concluded, I gave orders to have a little hut raised, large enough to contain him and three or four men, a fire, and a few bottles of brandy, because they were to keep watch near the place till the poor Colonel attempted to pass it. We had

E 6 agreed

agreed that they should array themselves in the Cossack military habit, which Leuhaupt had procured at Moscow, and sally out immediately after the accident that was so likely to befall the honest travellers from the effect of their labours. When I informed my colleague of the name of Rimbach's companion, his impatience redoubled, and he took possession of his hut with as much transport as if it had been an imperial palace.

“ I followed Rimbach when he left the house, as close as I could without being discovered, and was within twenty paces of him, when his horse and himself and the sledge and that villain his agent, sunk as suddenly into the fosse, as if an earthquake had eaten them up. By St. Nicholas, I pitied the poor beast of a horse, for I heard the devil of a clattering! this was the signal for the appearance of our Cossacks, and when I saw the enemy so surrounded that they could not escape, I drove to the hut, put on a Calmuck dress, which had been left for me,
and

and hurried away to join my troop. Leuhaupt had lost no time in reaching the disastrous spot, and finding his old friends according to expectation, snug behind their intrenchments, he gave them the *qui va la?* and threatened to fire a volley about their ears, unless they answered without delay. The unlucky scoundrels alarmed at such an unconscionable hurry, bruised and confounded too at an accident to which their recollection could afford no clue, endeavoured in vain to satisfy the impetuous demands of our friend, and he gave the word of command without deliberation, which produced a general discharge of powder over the heads of the enemy, who roared for quarter: fortunately for their bones, the horse was unable to move, but ashamed of the company he was in, he mingled his groans with their clamours. At this instant I came up, and in a tone of authority, inquired what they had fired at: I was informed that two mutinous dogs refused to surrender, or even to answer the *qui va la*. My Cossacks immediately received orders to
give

give no quarter, unless they surrendered instantly. The voice of Rimbach now rose from the valley in which it had been his evil fortune to pitch his tent, and informed us of the cursed disaster that had befallen him.

“ Is your horse there ?” asked Leuhaupt in accents several gun shots from the compassion the Colonel seemed to expect : “ by St. Michael of Kiow ! we want a horse—here comrades, let us help them out.”

“ This ceremony was performed in a manner so ungentle, and uncongenial with the miserable state of the culprits, that I believe they conceived their obligations not to be very potent for a kindness so roughly administered. In return for this favour, we demanded a loan of the rubles they had about them ; but all the money Rimbach had possessed, had been conveyed out of his pockets in his ascent from the pit ; notwithstanding his willingness therefore to accommodate our caprice on this head, he was obliged to
relinquish

relinquish his intention when he discovered that his ammunition was gone. To his infinite mortification however, no excuse he could offer had power enough to qualify the rage that attended our disappointment, and he underwent the discipline of the batogs, to make him confess where his money was concealed, which as he was a traveller, we affirmed he must be well provided with: but to console him in this affliction, we suffered his faithful servant to share in it.

“ Then again we applied for information to the back of the master, but with little effect; and by questioning them in this manner alternately, we gave them leisure to reflect upon the most energetic, powerful and pathetic remonstrances a villain in distress can tax his imagination to produce. At length even Leuhaupt became inclined to end the frolick, by conducting them a few versts out of their road, and leaving them to reach Moscow with all the diligence they could use. Some of our party meantime, who remained
behind,

behind, shouldered their spades and filled up the pit, so that with the precaution of throwing a little snow over the place and treading it down, Rimbach may look to-morrow in vain for the source and first cause of the discipline he has encountered—that is, if he should be able to leave his bed, which if I judge right, he will not be in haste to do.”

The Baroness was extremely delighted with the whole adventure, more especially as it had been executed without a discovery of the actors concerned in it, and that it sufficiently punished Rimbach and his vile associate, without shedding their blood or breaking their bones.

Phedora was not however so well pleased with it: she imagined it would be impossible to seal up the lips of so many men as had been employed in the project, and she well knew that all the interest of the Colonel, as well as the treacherous malice of his disposition, would be exerted to revenge the injury, and
perhaps

perhaps overturn the rising fortunes of the thoughtless Ivan. He had watched her countenance during the narrative, and as he saw it impressed with alternate terror and compassion, he heartily wished that the Baron had been less circumstantial.

Madame Hartfen had made the same observation, and called for those sentiments the silent gravity of Phedora already half expressed. She gently hinted the fears she had conceived, which the Baron immediately endeavoured to banish by remarking to her, that he had invariably given every instruction to the soldiers, and not only commanded them, but affected to command their lieutenant also, who was thus exonerated from any share of reprehension if the transaction should be discovered.

“ I employed the men,” continued he,
“ and I employed Leuhaupt, who can easily shelter himself beneath the rank I hold in the army, and the favour I am honoured with elsewhere, neither of which,” added he
warmly,

warmly, "shall be the cover of a base or an oppressive action; but by the head of the Czar I swear, I think I have this evening accomplished a very meritorious one in chastising a villain as he deserves to be chastised: however, my charming Phedora, to remove these tender fears on my young friend's account, I will endeavour to get the scoundrel Rimbach sent from Moscow." -

Phedora was charmed with the proposal, but the motive to which her anxiety had eventually been ascribed, she did not wish Ivan to believe; and she hesitated a few seconds before she could frame an answer, such as she hoped would intimate her thankful approbation without confirming the error of the Baron.

"What!" exclaimed Madame Hartsen during the pause, "will not this satisfy your scruples?"

"Yes, dearest Madam," returned Phedora hastily, "the Baron is all goodness, and
" I shall

I shall now no longer dread to behold the worthy Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine at Moscow, since Colonel Rimbach will not in any manner be then able to disturb their quiet."

"You have explained yourself admirably," cried the Baroness laughing: "but my good Ivan" said she, turning to him, "will it not be prudent for you to be at your lodgings to night? and now that the men are rested and refreshed, should they not be dismissed?"

These questions were assented to, and the Baron having himself administered to each of his coadjutors a cup of brandy, instructed them to enter Moscow singly, and gain their quarters immediately. The fellows, whose hearts the liberality of the Baron had entirely won, and to whom the character of Rimbach for strict discipline and severity was well known, promised the most implicit obedience to his commands, and departed highly gratified with their good cheer and their frolick.

Ivan

Ivan soon followed them, and shortly after Phedora retired to rest, not so well satisfied with the event of the day, as in the latter part of the evening she had compelled herself to appear.

The next morning the Baron hastened to Moscow, to learn from Bindorf the light in which his friend Rimbach considered his misadventure. Madame Hartsen declared that it had so completely occupied her imagination, that it formed the subject of her dreams, in which she had taken a very active share in inflicting the discipline the Colonel had received.

Phedora smiled at her lively description; but her thoughts were secretly employed in remarking that the thaw still continued, and that it had rendered the road even to Moscow very bad: her mind wandered with her Livonian friends amidst the difficulties and distresses she could so well conceive; but she was ashamed of damping for ever the vivacity

city of the Baronefs, by communicating an anxiety ſhe could not relieve, and with a heart far from being at eaſe, ſhe forced into her countenance an air of cheerfulneſs that deceived the eye.

Ivan came at the uſual hour, but to the queſtions of Madame Hartſen, he replied that he had not heard a ſyllable of the conſequences of their adventure, and that his men had arrived unobſerved at their quarters. His viſit was ſhort, for the Baron, whom he had met upon the road, had charged him to return immediately to Moſcow, and call at his houſe for the information he ſhould have gathered from Bindorf.

“ My dear Phedora,” ſaid the Baroneſs when Ivan had quitted them, “ as I know you have the intereſt of young Leuhaupt very much at heart—be not alarmed, I mean merely from the affection you feel for his family, I ſhall inform you that I have charged the Baron, as he values your favour, not to
vitate

vitiating his manners, and brutalise his sentiments by associating him with his companions. He thanked me for the implied compliment," added she laughing, "but promised to attend to my injunctions. As I am myself therefore at ease concerning Ivan, I thought it would be proper to tranquilise your mind also upon the subject, and now we will drop it."

They then conversed sometime upon indifferent topics, now and then adverting to that one, which even in dreams had engrossed the imagination of the Baroness, until the *tête à tête* was interrupted by the appearance of a domestic, who said that Captain Rectziki claimed admittance. Phedora started at a sound so unexpected, and even Madame Hartsen lost her presence of mind, for she imagined he came to announce unwelcome intelligence respecting either Rimbach or her husband.

Cassimir entered, and glancing his eyes towards Phedora, coolly bowed to her: she returned

returned the salutation with a varying aspect, and would instantly have retreated, but that he begged the Baroness to detain her a few moments, as he wished to mention in her presence a subject that related immediately to her.

“ You hear what Captain Rectzizi says, my dear Phedora,” said Madame Hartsen: “ will you oblige us both by remaining here ?”

She was unable to answer but by resuming her seat, and Cassimir then turning to her, said, “ you know most certainly, that my mother has confided to me five hundred rubles for your—your use ?”

“ The generous consideration of the Countess is not unknown to me,” replied she with faltering accents.

“ I have only to say,” resumed Rectzizi hastily, and with a freezing countenance, “ that I would willingly have retained the charge of this money until it had been required

required of me, but that I am suddenly ordered from Moscow: I wish to learn with whom I am to place it: perhaps I may deliver it into the hands of Mr. Leuhaupt immediately."

"Ah would to heaven you could!" she exclaimed, imagining he spoke of the revered protector of her childhood.

The Baroness bit her lip, and Cassimir blushed deeply from surprise, mortification and anger.

"But," added Phedora, "Mr. Leuhaupt is unhappily not yet ——"

She stopped, lest by dwelling on the imagined distress of the beloved exiles, she should be compelled to give way to the softness that had pervaded her heart.

"I understand you," said Rectzizi abruptly; "perhaps then Madame Hartsen will

will take charge of the deposit until Mr. Leuhaupt can claim it of her."

"It would be adding to the many obligations she has already heaped upon me," replied Phedora timidly.

The Baroness expressed her readiness to do any thing that should be required of her; and Cassimir then concerted with her that he should pay the money into the hands of the Baron, at his house at Moscow.

When this point was settled, he turned once more to Phedora, and in a manner highly tinged with sarcasm, told her he perfectly coincided in the earnest wish she had expressed, that Mr. Leuhaupt could immediately and consistently with the intentions of his mother, be invested with the five hundred rubles.

"Ah, Captain Rectzizi," replied she, "my heart thanks you for that intimation:

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yet

yet situated as I have the good fortune to be, it is not so much my welfare that I consult in the wish you mention, as the happiness of the worthiest and the best of men."

"No doubt he is such," cried Rectizi, with an emotion he could not repress; "but surely whilst your conduct evinces your sentiments so strongly, there can be little necessity for such repeated and animated professions!"

"You cannot blame me," exclaimed Phedora with a look of surprise, "for feeling and acknowledging with energy the tender gratitude I owe him."

"I commend it extremely," said Cassimir, in an accent and with a look of rage. Then uttering a hasty compliment to the Baroness who had in vain endeavoured to check the irresistible smile that agitated every muscle in her countenance, he retired with a violence of emotion, that for some minutes after he had left the room occasioned an unbroken silence.

"Wh

"What is the matter with this Rectzizi?" cried the Baronefs, with an affected air of astonishment.

"I know not," replied Phedora sighing: "but he is greatly altered. I think he appeared difpleafed with the extent of his mother's liberality to me: if fo, I would to heaven he would retain one half of it, nay every ruble except thofe you Madam have fo kindly difburfed for me."

"I cannot think him fo fordid," replied Madame Hartfen; "for I have heard that he was generous to excefs."

"He is greatly altered!" repeated Phedora with a yet deeper figh.

The confcience of the Baronefs now became exceffively troublefome to her, and fhe changed the converfation.

When the Baron returned, and to the aftonifhment of his wife he was unaccompanied by either of his friends, he confirmed the approaching departure of Caffimir Rectzizi

from Moscow, and added, that his regiment was ordered into the Ukraine, where it was expected there would be warm work, "so that your friend Reetzizi," said he, "will have an opportunity of signalizing himself, and getting promotion if he outlives the heat of the day."

Phedora shuddered, and Madame Hartsen who saw her emotion, prevented the Baron from continuing, by suddenly enquiring for the residue of Rimbach's adventure.

"Poor unhappy devil!" exclaimed he, laughing heartily: "never was man so much the dupe of his own imagination. I learnt from Bindorf who has seen him, that he did not reach his lodgings until this morning, half killed, half perished, and half crazy with indignation and fury against the authors of his misfortunes; though I find he imagines he had lost his road when he fell into our trap, and actually supposes that his sufferings were inflicted by the rapacity of a party of strag-
gling

gling Cossacks in search of plunder. He vows vengeance therefore against the whole nation, and considerably adds to the pain he endures by the most outrageous frenzies of passion. As for the villain Michaelhoff, he has been still more unfortunate than his master, and not being able to get home without assistance, he lay in the wood where our party left him, till Rimbach sent out some scouts to fetch him in."

Phedora absorbed in meditation, heard not a word the Baron had uttered; nor did she remember that he was present, till he took her hand, and drew her out of her reverie by an energetic eulogium on young Leuhaupt, who was now become a first-rate favourite with him.

"Charming Phedora," continued he, "why should you wait for the old man's presence to give this fair hand to his son? we can easily obtain a Lutheran minister, for the Baroness tells me those are your principles,

ciples, and then the happiness of this gallant young fellow will be secured."

Phedora gazed upon Madame Hartfen and the Baron alternately, till at length the necessity of undeceiving him superceded in her mind the extreme surprise and some mixture of anger which she felt at an attack so unexpected.

When she had fully explained her sentiments for Ivan, the Baron in his turn exhibited symptoms of astonishment not unmixed with incredulity: but Phedora unable any longer to support her spirits from sinking to the lowest ebb, disregarded both the one and the other, and withdrew with precipitation.

When she had gained her own apartment, she burst into a passionate fit of tears, which relieved the fullness of her heart, and she then became sufficiently composed to review with tolerable exactness the conduct of Rectzizi: it appeared to her that he was highly
offended;

offended ; but though she had for a moment allowed herself a supposition injurious to the known liberality of his character, she could not persevere in an opinion so degrading, and concluded with the idea that he had learnt the visits of Ivan, and thought that his partiality to her was returned with an equal sentiment of affection. If he indeed imagined so, she wished to undeceive him, to impress on his mind that though she could never dare to deserve the censure of her own heart by listening to his vows, she would never receive those of another. But he had fled so suddenly from her sight !—she recollected too, that she had not had time to inquire after the welfare of the Countess, or that of the gentle Ulmeri, and severely reproached herself with the omission. It was now she reflected, too late to repair it, as Restzizi was most probably already on his march to gain a situation replete with varied and unavoidable perils : this idea again drew from her eyes tears of anguish not to be repressed : but the Baroness, who guessed how she was employed, now

interrupted their course by her entrance, and Phedora dreading her raillery equally with the more serious yet gentle reprehension she sometimes employed to check her too solemn meditations, started up in some confusion, and hardly knowing what she said, made a broken apology for the visible indulgence she had given to her tell-tale tears.

Madame Hartsen shook her head: "You have frightened away the Baron," cried she. "he is actually returned to Moscow, and I expect you will console me for the deprivation of which you are the cause. Come therefore without any reluctance, and amuse me for the rest of the day, without giving way a moment to absence and reflection."

She then led her to the sitting-room, and told her that in compliance with the earnest entreaty of the Baron they must again take up their residence at Moscow, until the weather was sufficiently settled to make the roads more passable.

"I

"If you have not any objection to urge against this plan," said Madame Hartfen with her accustomed kindness, "we will depart to-morrow, otherwise we must remain here weather-bound for some time."

Phedora readily assented to the proposal, though she felt concerned at quitting the peaceful habitation of the Baroness, for the riotous one of her husband. On the following day therefore they set off for Moscow, where they arrived without accident, notwithstanding a few inconveniences they were obliged to encounter from the effect of a rapid thaw, which had partially melted and broken the snow, so as nearly to prevent the possibility of any kind of travelling.

Ivan heard of their intended expedition from the Baron, and met them on the road before they had proceeded two versts; his instructions and personal exertions were of infinite service to them, and to him they were principally indebted for their safety.

The Baron warmly expressed his gratitude for the intrepidity with which they had undertaken the journey to gratify his wishes, and Jalgourouki formed his countenance into something like a smile when Phedora appeared to him. Bindorf was absent, charitably employed the Baron said, in attending his sick friend, who was not yet able to quit his bed. Ivan was invited to stay dinner, and the approving aspect of Madame Hartsen induced him to accede to it most readily.

The evening was not as usual wholly spent in riot and intoxication; and though young Leuhaupt did not escape from table with intellects as clear as when he sat down to it, it was yet evident to the Baroness that her husband had complimented her injunction with an attention tolerably scrupulous and extremely unusual.

Jalgourouki with a very small share of discernment, soon began to suspect where the attachment of Ivan was placed, and regard-

ing

ing him with a visible disapprobation, received in return looks of anger and jealous resentment.

The Baroness readily perceived their mutual glances, and dreading lest young Leuhaupt in his present situation should unguardedly draw upon himself the enmity of a man who possessed the power of injuring his fortunes, she hinted to him with the good-humoured freedom she knew how to exert without offending, that it was time for him to retire. As he never disputed her mandate, he immediately obeyed her, much to the satisfaction of Phedora, who saw that he was in a humour to quarrel, though she had not discovered the reason of it.

The Baroness now began to be very well convinced, that in defiance of the good qualities of Ivan, he was exactly calculated to render the life of her young friend extremely miserable, should he ever prevail upon her to unite her fate with his. She saw
E 6 that

that his love was highly tinged with jealousy, and as the peculiar beauty of Phedora could not fail to raise general admiration, this bias which partook of the violence that accompanied every sentiment with which he was agitated, would become both to him and to her, a perpetual source of disquiet, and banish from her heart the friendship she had been used to feel for him, and the gratitude with which she might otherwise repay his love; whilst it would prevent her from imbibing a more tender regard for him. She could not help secretly reflecting at the same time that Cassimir Rectzizi appeared endued with that temperance of mind, that power of subjugating the resentments, the jealousies, the vindictive emotions equally involuntary and unjust, which the human heart whilst it is subject to error will ever feel. She saw that Phedora discerned the faults of the one with a clear and unbiassed judgment, and even magnified the virtues of the other with the fond partiality of love.

The

The Baroness had heard from her lips, those events which had introduced Rectzizi so advantageously to the knowledge of Phedora, when the simplicity of her mode of life, and the narrow circle of humble beings in her native village, were little calculated to guard her mind from the impression it received, by placing in imagination between her and the being she so much admired, the unthought-of barrier of high rank and considerable wealth. In truth the sweetness of Cassimir's temper, his gentle manners, the modest deference with which he listened to Mr. and Mrs. Leuhaupt, and the ready hilarity he displayed when he joined in conversation with the younger part of the set amongst whom chance had thrown him, banished every idea of superiority from the artless mind of Phedora, when it had once lost the impression his magnificent garb (for so she thought it) and the unaffected air of command in which he addressed his men, had originally inspired: and she even imagined that Ivan or any other young man, might

might engage in the troops of the great Czar, and be what Reetzizi appeared.

The Baroness listening to the narrative of her life, which she had engaged her to relate circumstantially, traced from her early years, all her pursuits, her sentiments and her wishes: she followed her with a strict and scrutinizing eye through each various turn of fortune, and dived into the recesses of her heart, whilst with keen perception, she marked the progressive and alternate emotion that accompanied each epoch of the tale. Hence the strong friendship she experienced for Phedora: it was founded on the virtues, the amiable candour, the gentle goodness of a mind she had carefully examined; and the more visible but not less pleasing qualifications which daily presented themselves to her notice, rivetted the attachment to which they had originally inclined her. In proportion as it increased, she found herself less and less willing to forward the claims of Ivan, and more disposed to regret the improbability of her

her union even at any future time with Casimer Rectzizi: but the confidence the Countess had reposed in her, and the real welfare of Phedora forbade any intimation of these sentiments, and she prudently repress them.

Almost unknown however to herself, those arguments she still maintained in favour of young Leuhaupt, lost the efficiency, the vigour and spirit she had originally given them, and the heart of Phedora felt and rejoiced in the change. But as the zeal of the Baroness cooled, Ivan found another advocate in her husband, who charmed with the open character of the young man, and that frankness of demeanor so congenial with his own, seized every opportunity of advancing his interest, by extolling him in the presence of Phedora. Unconscious of the aim of the Baron, she heard his commendations for sometime with pleasure, and was generously delighted that Ivan had obtained so powerful a friend; but when she discovered that they were thrown out as lures to entrap her

her more peculiar approbation, she could no longer listen to them with complacency : her patience forsook her at being thus perpetually urged on a theme that became each day more repugnant to her inclinations, and the extreme good-will of the Baron did poor Leuhaupt considerable injury in her opinion.

Phedora longed to know if Rectzizi had quitted Moscow ; but she felt an unconquerable dislike to question the Baron upon the subject, and still more reluctance to apply to Madame Hartsen : she had heard the appellation of Cassimir's regiment, and had retained it with an exactness of memory she invariably experienced about every thing relating to him : she therefore seized an opportunity of being a few moments alone with Jalgourouki to inquire with some hesitation, and still more confusion, if it still remained at Moscow. The Rus informed her after a long and solemn pause, during which she suffered a thousand uneasy and apprehensive emotions, that he could not answer her interrogation, but

but that he would ask of some officers his friends.

“No, no!” cried she eagerly, “I am far from wishing you to have so much trouble about a matter of mere curiosity: I beg you will not ask any one, for I have no further wish to know.”

Jalgourouki insisted however, that he would make every inquiry in his power, and desired her to repeat the name of the regiment, that he might not mistake it for another.

At this moment Ivan entered the room; but the Russ entirely disregarding his presence, still continued looking at Phedora as if he awaited the intelligence he had demanded; and supposing by her silence she had not heard him, he repeated with a very deliberate accent the name of the regiment and asked if he was right.

“What

“What of it?” said Ivan hastily, and changing colour.

“Nothing—no—nothing,” replied Phedora in an agony, “only I—that is Prince Jalgourouki mistook me—I asked him a question of indifference and he would give it more attention ——.”

“What is the question?” repeated Ivan: “perhaps,” he added, turning to the Rufs, “I could answer it.”

“Very poffibly,” returned Jalgourouki: “do you know if Czeretoff’s regiment is ftill at Mofcow?”

“Was this the question?” asked Ivan, his eyes sparkling with anger: “yes it *has* left Mofcow: nor does that favoured individual ftay behind, for whom this indifferent question was urged.”

His indignant voice and manner, however difpleafing to Phedora, fhe endured with patient filence, becaufe her heart accused her of having acted with impropriety: but the refentment of Ivan was not in the prefent
instance

instance to be softened by the gentle forbearance that tacitly confessed her error; and the Baron on entering the apartment, was astonished at the discomposure of his countenance, and the vehemence of his gesture; whilst the Russ scarcely comprehending any part of what had past, regarded him with an almost equal surprise, and Phedora felt confounded at the indecent violence of temper Ivan thus displayed before the Baron, and shock'd at being the primary occasion of it; dreading too the interpretation that would be put upon what she had so incautiously done, she flew to the Baroness to confess her indiscretion, and ask her advice and interference.

Madame Hartsen chid her, but without harshness; and immediately passed into the apartment where Ivan still remained with the Baron: Jalgourouki she found had quietly retreated, but the impetuous young man was yet speaking in an accent of violence.

“ Leuhaupt,”

“Leuhaupt,” said the Baroness, “when will you correct this vehemence of disposition? calm yourself and listen to me.”

“Do so,” cried the Baron; “she will give you better advice believe me than I can. I leave you to profit by it.”

He then slipped away, and went to the with-drawing room of Madame Hartsen in search of Phedora, whom he found in a distress of mind for which he could not account, with the traces of tears still upon her cheeks.

“Why do you weep, lovely Phedora?” asked he: “let not the idle jealousies of this young man disturb you. Is it true that you feel averse from rewarding his love?”

She gave her assent; and the Baron then falling at her feet, with an air of gallantry entreated that she would receive his homage with more indulgence.

Phedora

Phedora started with a look of astonishment and horror at the position in which he had so suddenly cast himself; the colour fled her face, and her limbs trembled.

“ Why all this surprise,” cried the Baron still kneeling: “ you must confess charming Phedora, that whilst I imagined Leuhaupt had any chance of succeeding, I was far from endeavouring to supplant him; but as you acknowledge ——.”

“ Be not so barbarous as to speak to me thus,” interrupted Phedora; “ rise Baron Hartfen, and do not by such horrible cruelty deprive me of a friend so respected, so beloved, so amiable as the Baroness—but I must now fly from her ——.”

“ Fly from whom?” exclaimed Madame Hartfen as she entered, “ not from me I hope!”

The Baron starting up in confusion inexpressible, saw with a too-late regret, the unpleasant situation in which he had involved himself

himself, his wife and the distressed Phedora, whose countenance marked the terror, the misery, the agitation of her mind. Compassion as well as justice, instantly prompted him to exculpate her in the opinion of the Barones.

“She is innocent,” cried he, “Phedora is innocent! I take every saint to witness—.”

“My good friend,” interrupted Madame Hartsen coolly, “why should you thus unconscionably disturb the repose of all the saints to attest a circumstance I can never for a moment doubt? Is it possible Phedora, that forewarned as you must acknowledge you was of this agreeable little incident, you can thus flutter and discompose yourself as if it had stolen upon you unawares? see,” added she, turning to the Baron with a countenance that annihilated every sentiment of pride his heart had ever nourished, “Behold the charming effect of your prostrate adorations! the words admiration and love falling from your lips, have put our poor Phedora into
such

such an agony of horror and antipathy, that it will cost me a whole day to rally her out of it."

The poor Baron unable any longer to withstand this scene, made a sudden effort to retreat from it; but Madame Hartsen catching his arm, cried with a smile of unaltered pleasantry, "Stay, recreant, and drop once more upon those gallant knees to obtain the forgiveness of the gentle Rubenski for the alarm you have given her."

He complied without hesitation, and Phedora distressed as she was, found herself almost compelled to laugh at the mien of the Baron, so different from that he had exhibited but a few minutes before, in the same humble position. At the entreaty of Madame Hartsen the pardon was verbally granted, and the calm which Phedora had almost imagined to have been banished for ever from her bosom, again returned, with the most enthusiastic sentiment
of

of admiration and gratitude to the Baroness, in whose heart no mean envy or jealousy could find place. Her husband sensibly affected with the delicate generosity of mind she had so amiably displayed, payed her the involuntary homage of respect and attention she so well merited from him, and to Phedora his conduct became equally kind and devoid of censure.

The Baroness, who alone possessed the power of checking the sallies of Ivan's anger before his own reflections could moderate them, once more endeavoured to make him sensible of the injury he did to the interest he still maintained in the bosom of Phedora, by the violence he permitted himself to exhibit so perpetually in her presence.

“ If,” said Madame Hartsen, “ you suspect that she prefers another to you, either give up a pursuit at which your delicacy should recoil, or cease to reproach her with
a partiality,

a partiality, you must be sensible from experience is involuntary, and which if it is unfortunate, must be in itself more wounding than the bitterest taunts disappointed passion can suggest. These believe me, can only change indifference into hatred, and it is a mistaken notion to suppose that dislike or abhorrence is sooner transformed to a sentiment of tenderness, than a more careless opinion—at least with a gentle and well regulated mind; for such an one will never hate without a sufficient cause. Suspicion and consequent reproach, which suppose in the object on which they act, not the appearance only but the reality of evil, will irritate the candour so wronged to a degree of irascibility and disdainful abhorrence it will seldom forget, because it is seldom induced to experience them.”

Ivan sighed; he felt the propriety of the alternative the advice of the Baroness had pointed out to him, but he felt too, that he had not sufficient strength of mind

to follow either. He imagined, and not without some reason, that since the fracas which Jalgourouki had so unintentionally occasioned, Phedora looked more coldly upon him, and this idea made him miserable: still however he hovered about her, but in despair at the ill success of his importunities, he allowed her at length an intermission of peace.

CHAP. IV.

“ There is I know not what of sad presage,
“ That tells me I shall never see thee more.”

PHEDORA had been uneasy at the necessity she was in of living under the roof of the Baron, after the unexpected scene she yet trembled to look back upon; but the unremitting kindness of Madame Hartsen, who endeavoured to chase from her mind every unpleasant reflection, and the reparation which the increased respect of the Baron seemed meant to offer, at length removed the awkward sensations which his presence inspired.

Some days after, she was conversing tête à tête with her friend in a strain more cheerful than she had lately been accustomed to, when the Baron suddenly entered the room, and told his lady she must instantly prepare to quit Russia. Madame Hartsen appeared surprised, and desired him to explain himself.

“ I have this moment,” said he, “ seen a courier from the Czar, who has obtained a complete victory over the Swedes at Pultowa: * I am ordered to join Menzikoff, who is hastening to Poland with a large body of cavalry, and I am to select of the regiments now in Moscow two of the finest to reinforce him. You will doubtless chuse to accompany me to your native country, which will now be at liberty to recognize once more its ancient sovereign. You will travel in safety; and it shall be my care to procure you a proper escort to Bielsk, should we not pass through it, that you may have the satisfaction of embracing your friends there.”

“ I

* Vide History of Russia.

"Is it possible," exclaimed the Baronefs, "that all this can be true?"

"Very possible;" returned he, smiling at her incredulity: "but you must hasten your preparations, for I must leave Moscow the day after to-morrow."

"So soon! The roads are certainly very inviting for female travellers!—my little Rubenski will you venture with me?"

"Any where," cried Phedora warmly; "to the deserts of Siberia or the plains of Astracan!"

"Bravely resolved!" exclaimed the Baron; "but dismiss your fears: if you should sink into a mountain of drifted snow with a morass at the bottom of it, you will have three thousand Russ soldiers to dig you out again."

He then hurried away, leaving Madame Hartfen and Phedora regarding each other with a kind of confused astonishment at the suddenness of the intelligence he had brought them. The Baronefs however quickly recollected herself, and recovering her usual pre-

sence of mind, began to give the necessary orders to her domestics.

Phedora solicited to be likewise employed, but before the Baroness could assign her any task, Ivan rushed into the room with a disordered aspect, and exclaimed,

“ Have I heard right? are you quitting Moscow?”

“ We are,” replied Phedora, with a gentle accent, “ and you must think with what regret I leave it, whilst we each day expect the arrival of your dear and revered father, and my beloved companion.”

“ Can you indeed Phedora,” cried he, “ resolve to fly the approach of those who would behold you with such tender delight? can you consent to deprive them of the exquisite happiness of embracing you after so long, so cruel a separation? If you can reflect upon their bitter disappointment and still persevere in your design, ah Phedora! in compassion

to the wretched Ivan, who cannot live in your absence, do not go!"

"If the Baroness will condescend to judge for me," said Phedora, "I will be implicitly guided by her counsel. I should not be able to endure the anger of Mr. Leuhaupt, or that his heart should silently accuse me of selfish ingratitude. No—rather than allow him to form a supposition so wounding, I would watch his approach at the gates of Moscow, without a roof to shelter me."

"You will remain here then," cried Ivan eagerly.

"I will stay, or I will go," she replied, "as the Baroness shall decide for me."

"My dear child," said Madame Hartsen, "in this instance you must decide for yourself: I will simply state the casualties that in either case might befall you.—I have not unfortunately, any friend in Moscow with whom I could place you; I must therefore leave you at best in a doubtful situation, depending upon the protection of strangers. It is true Mr. Leuhaupt and his daughter

might arrive very shortly, but it is more probable that this weather will detain them till the roads are more passable: it may be—it most likely will be, more than a month before they can reach this place. Suppose the regiment of Ivan should in this space be ordered from hence, you then lose the only aid you have to resort to, against the dangers your youth, the loveliness of your person and your defenceless situation expose you to. What would in this case become of you, if your Cossack Zappavo should obtain any information of your residence, which even in this immense town is possible. * Your delightful lover Matheowitz too," she added smiling, "might again drag you to his den, and not only introduce you to his august family, but invite them with better success to the wedding feast."

By

* The city of Moscow was twenty miles in circumference. A part of it called the Chinese town, exhibited all the rarities of China; and the quarter of the Kremlin was embellished by the palace of the Czar, built by Italian architects, as were two of the churches by the famous Aristotle of Bologna.—Vide Voltaire.

By the countenance of Ivan it now appeared that he began to yield to her reasoning, and she continued: "If on the contrary you accompany us to Poland, you will not at least be without the protection you have hitherto experienced with me. It may be some months ere you see your worthy friends, but you will be morally certain of meeting them in a short course of time, since the Baron will undoubtedly return to Moscow when the object of this expedition is accomplished. The communication between the two kingdoms would then I should imagine become more frequent and less dangerous, and if you should be desirous of rejoining your Livonian friends before the fortunes of the Baron recal him here, we shall meet with opportunities of entrusting you to the care of people in whom we could confide."

Ivan now again wavered; the Baroness ceased, and Phedora knew not how to decide: she saw to which side the opinion of Madame Hartsen leaned, but her heart was divided.

At length the dread of the almost irresistible influence Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine might be induced to employ in favour of Ivan, determined her to undertake the Polish journey.

He heard her intention in silent despair, and would have withdrawn without the least remonstrance, had not the Baroness, affected with a resignation so generally incompatible with his natural disposition, detained him.

“ Tell me Leuhaupt,” said she, “ does not your judgment coincide with the resolution Phedora has adopted ?”

“ As you stated her situation,” replied he, “ she could take no other: yet there is a plan, which were she to adopt, no embarrassment or apprehension of danger could remain on the mind: but you—even you, hitherto so much my friend and advocate, passed it by without notice.”

Madame

Madame Hartfen readily guessed his meaning, though she desired him to explain it.

“ If Phedora,” resumed he, “ would give me her hand before you leave Moscow, every difficulty which attends her continuance here would cease : you would then place her in the protection of one whose life should be spent in manifesting his gratitude, his admiration and love : but Phedora will not consent to this—she quits me probably for ever, without one sigh or one expression of regret, nor do I wish her to pronounce it, whilst her heart would coldly revoke the sentence, and stain her lips with falsehood.”

“ Unkind Ivan !” exclaimed Phedora : “ why will you thus embitter the sisterly affection I have ever cherished for you ? why will you require a more tender sentiment than my heart will acknowledge, and outrage the friendship I really experience, by these repeated and cruel reproaches ?”

“ Will you,” demanded he, “ consent to what I have proposed, or will you give me up for ever ?”

“ You already know my sentiments,” returned Phedora, “ do not urge me to repeat them.”

“ Will you at least engage,” resumed Ivan, “ that you will not favour the pretensions of any other man until you are restored to my father: promise me this, and I will torment you no longer, but endeavour to endure your absence with some patience.”

Phedora recollected the improbability of again meeting Cassimir, or even if chance should so ordain it, the barrier of his father’s his mother’s disapprobation, was impassable: his own indifference too——she hastened to give the promise Ivan required, notwithstanding the prohibiting gravity of Madame Hartsen, and then hinted to him that his entrance had interrupted the preparations it was so necessary to make.

Ivan retired with a mind tolerably composed, and when he was gone the Baroness intimated to Phedora her dislike to such engagements

engagements as she had suffered young Leuhaupt to fetter her with.

“ You reflect not,” said she, “ on the many circumstances that may occur to render them more painful and embarrassing than you can possibly recollect at the moment they are given; when perhaps the importunity that extorts them, distracts and scatters that perception and firmness, which at such a juncture are so necessary to direct the heart in what it should with-hold in prudence, and grant to compassion: but the assent has passed your lips, and is beyond recal: let it dear Phedora, be the last of this nature you allow yourself to give, and may this little reform in a too unthinking and generous compliance, be affected by my advice alone, without the aid of that repentance which I have, simply it may be, spoken of to you.”

Phedora thanked the Baroness for this representation, which she was sensible friendship only had drawn from her, and thanked
her

her too for the wish with which it was closed.

It was some time after Ivan had left the house, that Madame Hartsen recollected the possibility there existed, that he might accompany them into Poland, should her husband in selecting the two regiments, chuse that to which he belonged as one of them. She immediately communicated this idea to Phedora, who was far from deriving any pleasure from it: it pictured to her, Mr. Leuhaupt and the amiable Catherine after a long and perilous journey, when they expected to find themselves furrounded with friends, still desolate, abandoned, and wanting the consolatory and cherishing tenderness their melancholy pilgrimage had too well fitted them to receive. She determined however, with the assistance of the Baron, to leave in the hands of some person at Moscow, the principal part of Countess Rectzizi's donation for their use: and this expedient once thought of, in some degree relieved her anxiety concerning them.

Madame

Madame Hartfen undertook to arrange this point, which too much interested her, she said, to allow it to be neglected. When the Baron returned home therefore, she took him apart, and having intimated the wish of Phedora, and added some instructions of her own, she charged him to terminate the business instantly, that her young friend and herself might lose all uneasiness lest it should be omitted.

The regiment of Ivan Leuhaupt, the Baron told her, he had been compelled to reject; but as it would not long remain inactive at Moscow, he thought the deposit had better be placed with the knowledge of the young man, in the care of some person whose residence was fixed and certain. Madame Hartfen assented; and then consulted him upon some particulars relating to her little habitation, which contained things she was unwilling to abandon, yet knew not how to remove.

Prince

Prince Jalgourouki accompanied his friend; but Major Bindorff whom the Baronefs and Phedora had feen very little of fince their return, remained in Ruffia. He appeared the day preceding their departure, to bid them adieu, and prepare them for the intention of Colonel Rimbach, who meant to venture from his lodgings for the firft time fince his misadventure, to mitigate the mortification he felt at their unexpected journey by a perfonal farewell.

The Baronefs was delighted with the precaution he had taken of announcing his purpofe, becaufe it gave her an opportunity of rendering it abortive: for fhe declared her inability to receive any gueft, whilft her mind was fo much agitated by a variety of cares, and her memory charged with more than it could retain. The Major appeared difconcerted at this rebuff, but it was unanswerable, and he withdrew very little fatisfied.

The

The strictest inquiries and researches were now made throughout Moscow, lest Mr. Leuhaupt should have arrived within the last day or two, and Phedora by her departure be deprived of seeing him when it had been in her power: but it appeared from these, that no traveller from the eastern gate had entered Moscow for a week past, a circumstance for which the total breaking up of the frost fully accounted. However Phedora found herself disappointed by the ill-success of the effort, she could not avoid feeling the liveliest gratitude to the Baron and Madame Hartsen for having made it.

Ivan would not quit her but when his duty called him away, and she dreaded the moment of separation, when she expected to be pained by a display of that vivacity of sentiment, which when excited either by joy or sorrow, knew no bounds in the bosom of young Leuhaupt. The Baroness too, could not look forward to it, without the apprehension of some extravagance on the part of Ivan,
and

and infinite misery on that of Phedora: she determined therefore to avoid both the one and the other, by misleading him as to the hour of their departure. The Baron was instructed to mention a much later one than that on which it was agreed they should begin their hasty journey: and he privately entreated young Leuhaupt's Colonel, with whom he was well acquainted, to detain him upon duty, until Phedora and the Baroness should be many versts from Moscow.

In the evening, as Ivan rose to go, Phedora involuntarily held out her hand to him and bade him farewell: he appeared surprised, yet kissed her hand, and repeated the adieu.

"I shall see you to-morrow," added he eagerly; "I will be here as early as possible. Ah would to heaven I could bring you the intelligence of my father's arrival! would you still leave Moscow?—"

"I am

“ I am afraid,” returned she, “ you will not have an opportunity of seeing how I would act in that case.”

Early in the morning the carriage was ordered to the door: the Baron rode a few versts on horse-back at the head of his troops, of which he had taken the command, and waited only to see the Baronefs and Phedora accommodated as conveniently as possible in the vehicle he had procured, which was destined to contain occasionally besides a woman of Madame Hartfen, himself and Jalgourouki. The Baronefs regarded the machine for some time in silence, and could not help regretting that the season would no longer allow the use of the sledge: she now began in imagination to compute the disasters, overthrows and mishaps, a ponderous Russ carriage was so liable to meet with in roads almost wholly impassable, and entirely broken by a rapid thaw, succeeding to a frost of many months, in which time incessant falls of snow must have accumulated in the vallies,

vallies; and where the sun could penetrate to detach it from the mountain side, it would soon swell the most trifling brook into a rapid and dangerous torrent. Yet in the midst of the reverie Madame Hartsen indulged, the picture of the Cossack waggon with the figure of Zareta most prominently placed in the piece, such as Phedora had described it, struck her fancy, put to flight all the grave reflections her fears had mustered, and she indulged herself in a sudden fit of laughter.

The Baron had observed her thoughtfulness, and was most unexpectedly pleased with the issue of it; for some of the ideas which had so forcibly affected her, had likewise made some impression upon his mind; but he was not of a disposition to give way to any obstacles that happened to thwart either his wishes or his projects, and seized the moment of returning gaiety in the Baroness, to inquire of the female attendant who accompanied her, if the provisions were already placed in the carriage.

An

An answer in the affirmative, was the signal for Phedora and her lively friend to follow.

“Are you ready?” inquired he.

“Yes,” replied Madame Hartfen with a shrug of resignation; “we have engaged to march under your standard, and we will not desert.”

She then led the way to the carriage, and Phedora accompanied her. The Baron assisted them into it, with a promise to overtake and rejoin them within an hour.

“You will share our fate then,” returned Madame Hartfen, “whatever it may be: but what is become of Jalgourouki?”

“He rides with me;” replied the Baron; “you will see him at the same time.”

He then gave the word of command to the driver, who began like Phedora’s Cossack charioteer, with a trot the Baroness would willingly have excused herself from being
sensible

sensible of; but a recollection of Ivan made her endure the inconvenience with fortitude, the more surely to spare him and her young companion a parting interview.

“Poor Leuhaupt!” exclaimed she.—Phedora sighed; yet in spite of the compassion that assailed her gentle heart, she could not but rejoice in the certainty of not being compelled to behold his frantic grief.

The Baroness travelled two or three versts without speaking, and apparently immersed in thought. Phedora was pleased to be spared the effort of maintaining something like a conversation with a woman of Madame Hartsen’s vivacious turn of mind, and indulged her own reflections without restraint: they were interrupted however, in rather more than half an hour, by an incident that did not preface a happy termination to the journey.

In

In going down a gentle descent, where the melting snow had formed in the middle of the road a deep but narrow channel of water, the driver intent on preventing his horses from slipping their feet into it, did not observe that the carriage was sinking on the off side through a slender surface of ice into an immense rut, formed by the passing and repassing of the ammunition waggons before the winter months had set in.

Some Russ servants who attended the Baroness on horseback, saw the danger and raised their voices to stop the carriage before it overturned : but having accomplished this, they had not ingenuity enough to be of further use, and Madame Hartsen was obliged to wait the approach of her husband, before he could be extricated from her unpleasant situation ; for to advance or recede was found equally impossible.

The driver with infinite composure, took from a fir pouch that hung by his side, a bottle

bottle of rye spirits, with which he amused himself in the interim, and the horsemen drew themselves up in a close phalanx on one side of the carriage, to shelter themselves from a piercing shower of rain that rattled in large drops against the opposite one, whose chilling influence made the travellers within, shiver beneath the furs that enveloped them.

“ Fortune is revenging upon you,” said the Baroness to Phedora, “ your cruelty to Ivan ; and thus early in the alternative you have chosen in flying from him, gives you an agreeable perspective of what she means to do for you.”

“ I am sorry,” returned Phedora smiling, “ that you should be implicated in the mischief solely aimed at me.”

“ Very true,” said Madame Hartsen : “ and I assure you if our progress continues to be impeded in this manner, I shall be tempted to set you out in the road side, and go on by myself.”

The

The fair culprit replied to this threat with the liveliness it was meant to excite, and a few minutes after, the Baron and Jalgourouki appeared in sight, who hastened to the carriage on observing at some distance its want of motion.

A detachment of soldiers was immediately ordered to the spot, whose assistance soon extricated the machine, and again the travellers advanced. They proceeded then for some time without halting, and at sun-set the Baron and his friend quitted their horses and obliged Madame Hartsen and Phedora with their society. They continued journeying though slowly, all night, and at break of day were delighted with the sight of a Russian Inn, which was as usual however little better than a hovel, where all that could be obtained was straw for repose and a stove to re-animate the frozen traveller.

The provisions were brought from the carriage; but the Baron and Jalgourouki

alone did honour to them, for Madame Hartfen and her young friend were fatigued and spiritless. In vain did the Baron rally them, or Jalgourouki praise the repast, they both turned from it with an indifference almost amounting to disgust.

In about two hours they again resumed the carriage; but in proportion as they quitted the vicinity of Moscow, the roads were found to be less passable, and their embarrassments increased: every ascent and descent however gentle, was tedious and dangerous from the rapid melting of the snow and ice, which perpetually broke the mellowed ground, and worked it into channels. The Baron began to be extremely alarmed at the difficulty he had in making the heavy Russ carriage keep up with the march of the troops, which he did not dare to slacken, and every hour threatened to separate them from each other. Even Jalgourouki manifested some uneasiness lest this should happen, and the Baroness was not without apprehension; but she restrained

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those fears which seemed a kind of reproach to her husband for having urged her to undertake a journey so perilous, and wearing the countenance of a heroine, affected to laugh at the inconveniencies she had already endured, and those which seemed on the point of assailing her. Phedora was not on her part compelled to dissemble, for she had found herself in situations so much more unpleasant, that the present one appeared absolute safety from the comparison.

After travelling three days and nights with very little intermission of rest, the whole party arrived at Permitt, a town on the river Occa. Here the troops halted a day, and the Baroness almost sinking with fatigue, began to feel her complaisance unequal to the task of supporting any further show of spirit and courage. When they quitted this place, the fears of the Baron were verified; for the face of the country being diversified with hill and dale, the drifted snow lying in the vallies which the thaw had already softened, was

still more meliorated by the streams that poured from the hills; so that when a passage was dug for the carriage to pass, it was almost instantly filled with water.

These difficulties might have been easily foreseen by the Baron, had he suffered himself to imagine that the frost would have continued to break; but he relied upon the earliness of the season, and against his better judgment persisted in asserting that it would hold out until he reached the dutchy of Luthuania. The female travellers journeyed onward however, to about eighty versts west of Permitt, and on arriving at a small town south of Smolensko, the Baron who feared that any delay in the march of the troops would be imputed to a dishonourable motive should Menzikoff engage the Swedes before he joined him, proposed to Madame Hartsen that Phedora and herself should remain there under the protection of Jalgourouki, until the weather became more settled, when they should proceed to Minski, and from thence

to Grodno, where it was probable the Baroness might find the Count and Countess Rectzizi.

She very readily agreed to this plan, for she had not been at all enamoured of the dangers she had already encountered, nor was she very eager to meet those she might reasonably expect if she continued her route.

The Rufs, who had not been previously consulted in this arrangement, hesitated a few moments, but at length consented to become her escort; for he had no post in the troops he accompanied, and felt in spite of his phlegm, a singular satisfaction in the society of Madame Hartsen's beautiful young friend.

When the Baron took his leave, he saluted Phedora with an affection open and unrestrained.

"Farewell charming Rubenski," cried he, "do not think of me with a too just

severity of censure ; but learn from that good little creature," he added, pointing to the Baroness, "to remember my faults with indulgence, and to overlook my follies."

He then tenderly embraced Madame Hartsen, and departed with a thousand injunctions to Jalgourouki, to give a good account of his charge when next they met.

"What a strange composition," exclaimed the Baroness after a few moments of silence "is the character of that man! the chief inducement I felt to this journey was I confess, that I might not lose sight of him; for I actually began to entertain hopes that he would assert himself and become the rational being nature intended him for: but now that he will again wholly associate with his Russian companions in arms, he will sink, deep perhaps, into the degeneracy that mocks and discourages every effort. I am tempted to make."

Phedora

Phedora was not prompted by the voice of flattery, when she affirmed that it was impossible but the Baron must at length be weaned from his errors, by the merit to which no one could be insensible.

“ And who Madam,” continued she, “ that acknowledges the charms of your society, would not when they could obtain it, quit any bias which the least reflection must show to them in colours so unpleasing, as your disapprobation will stamp it with.”

The entrance of Jalgourouki interrupted the conversation; and Madame Hartsen forgot her grave reflections amidst a variety of attempts to discompose the solemnity of his visage; but it was proof against the highest flights of her vivacity, and all the concomitant laughter of Phedora.

“ What shall we do with this animal?” cried the Baronefs when he had retired: “ the good Baron might as well have assigned us a

lead statue for a companion: however if his figure will frighten away a Zappavo or a Moretz, we must put up with his unconquerable stupidity."

Phedora professed herself perfectly well satisfied with the disposition of the Rufs, and would even, she said, very much admire his figure, provided it would have an effect so desirable.

"I shall not suffer," added she gaily, "from the neighbourhood of his insensibility; but the shafts of your wit dear Baroness will be terribly disgraced, by striking against an object so impenetrable."

"The dulness of the Prince," replied Madame Hartfen, "has a very magical effect upon the shafts you speak of; for before they reach his comprehension, they are generally reduced to the little feather that trims them, and even that is often borne back to me on the wings of a brandy zephyr."

Whilst

Whilst she was speaking, a regiment that paraded before the window, drew the attention of Phedora, who was struck with a reflection that the uniform was the same in which Rectzizi had first appeared to her: young as she then was, and delighted with a degree of finery she had so seldom contemplated, it had made an impression upon her memory not to be effaced.

The men were drawn up immediately in sight, and their officers stood conversing in small parties: Phedora looked in vain for a figure that resembled the one she had ever so much admired; but still she continued gazing, till she herself attracted the attention of those whom she appeared to regard so earnestly. An officer who had hitherto stood with his back towards her, suddenly turned round on receiving some intimation from his companion, and presented to Phedora the countenance of Lumerski: she was much pleased at this unexpected rencontre, and joyfully made him a sign of recognition.

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“ My

“ My dear little friend,” said the Baroness, who had been observing her, “ what delightful object has fixed you to that place for this ten minutes past ?”

“ I have discovered Captain Lumeriski,” returned she : “ if he is going to Moscow, he will see Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine : oh I would walk twenty versts to speak to him !”

“ We will endeavour to speak to him,” said Madame Hartsen, “ without the trouble of walking quite so far.”

She then called to one of her attendants, bade him enquire for Captain Lumeriski, and inform him that Baroness Hartsen wished for the honour of his company for a few moments.

When the servant was gone, “ Phedora,” cried Madame Hartsen, “ I do not like the character of this Lumeriski : but his own lips shall acquit or condemn him—be not alarmed : I will neither accuse nor reproach him. But I will entreat you to restrain your impatience to see him, until I have first conversed with him.”

Phedora

Phedora assented with a little hesitation, and then withdrew. Lumerski almost immediately entered with a countenance of expectation, and having bowed to the Baroness looked round for the fair Rubenski.

"Be seated," said Madame Harten: "my little friend Phedora has but now quitted the room, you shall see her in a few minutes. She is at present under my protection, in which Countess Rectzizi placed her some time back: you may imagine that in the many conversations we have had, your name and the obligations she so readily acknowledges to have received from you, have been mentioned. From the beneficence of the Countess she is no longer entirely destitute, and I am sure it would be her wish that I should discharge the pecuniary part of her debt to you."

This was strenuously opposed by Lumerski, who felt awkwardly conscious that his conduct must have appeared to the Baroness in a dis-

graceful light, if Phedora had mentioned it, as by her sudden flight it was evidently thought of by her, without confessing at the same time the sentiments he had imputed to her with such undoubted certainty. Madame Hartsen fixed upon his countenance her penetrating eyes, and gathered from the changes she observed in it, ideas by no means advantageous to him: he experienced all the force of her expressive looks, and endeavoured to learn more particularly what she thought of him, by entering into an explanation on his side, which would probably produce another on her part.

“ Phedora Rubenski,” said he, “ by flying so unaccountably from me, and from the best protection I was able as a soldier to afford her, and plunging into dangers I shuddered to think of, grieved and hurt me more than I can express: she is infinitely dear to a family I love and revere, and I hoped to have been so situated as to have restored her to them, would she but have

awaited the accomplishment of my purpose. I would willingly have given up my commission could I not otherwise have flown to succour the worthy Leuhaupt's: but her precipitate flight ——."

"Captain Lumeriski," interrupted the Baroness, "tell me sincerely, does not your conscience furnish you with a sufficient reason for the action you call unaccountable? you cannot be unacquainted with the delicacy of sentiment so conspicuous in my amiable little Rubenski, and you must from thence imagine that she would expose herself to any danger however great, to fly from benefactions unwillingly bestowed."

"Does Phedora accuse me of a conduct so mercenary?" demanded he with much emotion.

The Baroness now recollected the promise she had given not to reproach Lumeriski, and was angry with herself that she had broken it.

"Phedora

“ Phedora does not,” replied she more coolly, “accuse you at all: she merely laments that you withdrew from her the brotherly kindness you still manifested for some time, even after you had extricated her from her unpleasant situation with Matheowitz. But when your air, your words and countenance disclaimed the title of friend, she could no longer consent to receive from you those benefits, which an accompanying complacency of manner alone renders supportable to the obliged.”

Madame Hartfen checked herself when she found that she was again hurried into an infringement of the promise she had voluntarily made: and Lumerski felt exceedingly embarrassed to explain the motive upon which he had acted, without appearing to his fair monitress, whose keen glances he would willingly have averted, a vain coxcomb—whose best excuse for a want of humanity was founded in an absurd conceit which had caused him

him to act like an unfeeling and capricious fool.

His hesitation whilst he endeavoured to let the Baroness gently into the secret, appeared to her sportive imagination so ridiculous, and his fears when she reflected upon the unconscious innocence of Phedora, so laughable, that she could not refrain from smiling full in his face; and her air being rather tinged with sarcasm, the explanation of Lumerski suddenly arrived at a period, before he had entirely ended a little circumlocutory argument he had called to his aid.

“ Believe me,” cried Madame Hartsen, “ my poor little friend is as happily free from the prepossession you ascribe to her, as you could yourself wish her to be: nor did she ever, I will affirm, consider you for a moment, but as the intended husband of her beloved Catherine Leuhaupt.”

“ I now entirely subscribe to this opinion,” returned he, extremely disconcerted at the mistake

mistake he had been in ; “ for I have so high an idea of the ingenuoufness of Phedora, that I am fure fhe would not wifh to deceive you in any refpect ; and indeed had fhe been fo inclined, I feel that it is impoffible to efcape your penetration.”

“ Well then,” faid the Baronefs, “ as we have each removed from the other an unpleafing error, we will call Phedora to participate in our difcoveries.”

Madame Hartfen then fent to defire the prefence of her fair companion, and Lumerfki advancing towards her as fhe entered, with an air of contrition folicted her forgivenefs for the inconveniencies and dangers he had been the occafion of her enduring.

“ You need* the lefs hesitate to grant it to me, dear Phedora,” continued he, “ as I fhall be fufficiently punifhed by the abhorrence of Mr. and Mrs. Leuhaupt and your lovely friend, when they learn what you fuffered from my exceffive folly.”

“ Speak

"Speak no more in this strain," returned Phedora, presenting her hand to him, "I have already forgotten every thing in your conduct that gave me disquietude; but ah Captain Lumerski! Mrs. Leuhaupt cannot now blame you, nor can her gentle voice even commend as she was ever fond of doing."

"You alarm me," exclaimed he; "relieve my fears!"

"I would to heaven that I could!" replied Phedora, the tears dropping from her eyes; "but alas! our sweet Catherine has lost her mother."

Lumerski was affected: "What a cruel situation is her's!" cried he: "no power on earth shall restrain me—I will instantly fly to Casan."

"You had better direct your flight to Moscow," interrupted Madame Hartsen, "if you wish to see the worthy Leuhaupt and his daughter; for thither by this time the cares of the Count and Countess Rectzizi have conducted

conducted them. Are you marching that way?"

"Fortunately," cried he, "we are: but where—how shall I find them when I get there?"

"Of that," returned the Baroness, "we are ignorant; it is most probable however that Ivan will be able to assist your search: he is a Lieutenant in the division of Russ Hussars now at Moscow."

Lumeriski was both surprised and delighted with this intelligence, which would he said, be a circumstance so consoling to his family.

"This too," exclaimed Phedora, "was the work of the good Count Rectzizi!"

"What heavenly beneficence!" returned he: "You knew the Count then—was it at Moscow you saw him?"

Phedora assented.

"Was

“ Was my friend Cassimir there ?” resumed Lumerski.

Her cheeks flushed the deepest red at this question, and the next instant all animation fled them as suddenly. The Baroness to relieve her confusion, replied to the inquiry, and Lumerski then gradually sunk into a reverie, from which the teizing gaiety of Madame Hartsen soon drew him.

“ It is strange Phedora,” cried she, “ and equally provoking, that you have not had the curiosity to ask Captain Lumerski the reason of that reserve, that drove you so precipitately for shelter amidst the tents of the Cossacks ?”

“ I could not wish to remind him,” replied she, “ of what he appeared anxious to forget.”

“ That is certainly very pretty,” said the Baroness: “ but have you not really any curiosity to learn this redoubtable secret ?”

“ You

“ You are resolved to punish my ridiculous folly,” cried Lumeriski, “ as indeed it deserves to be punished ; but I hope Phedora, who is all indulgence, will not insist upon a discovery, which I own I am excessively unwilling to make.”

“ But I,” said Madame Hartfen, “ have not by any means the same objections ; and indeed I rather wish to caution my little friend, not to give in future, similar cause of offence. Know then my dear Phedora, that you were secretly accused of becoming desperately enamoured of the various excellencies of Captain Lumeriski, to the extreme endangering of his allegiance to his chosen mistress.”

Phedora imagined that the Baronefs was jesting, till casting her eyes undesignedly upon Lumeriski, the excessive discomposure of his countenance, which the arch expression in that of Madame Hartfen still heightened, led her to suppose that such had really been his sentiments. She was then almost equally disconcerted ;

disconcerted ; and felt a mixture of vexation and self-displeasure that she should have given birth to such a conjecture.

“ Do you plead guilty ? ” cried the Baroness, addressing the blushing Phedora.

“ I highly esteem and respect Captain Lumerski,” returned she, “ but —— ”

“ Do not now think it necessary,” cried Lumerski earnestly, “ to assert that my absurd supposition was unfounded. I have indeed deserved all the ridicule this lady takes so much pleasure in casting upon me, and I must endure it with patience : but I hope you will think me sufficiently punished in the reproaches I cannot cease to feel from my own heart, for having subjected you to the inconveniencies you have no doubt experienced, since my folly precipitated you so rashly into the power of Cotzwar, for thus far I traced you ; but he fled immediately beyond my power of pursuit, and since that moment I was unable to learn your destiny, which

which believe me Phedora, I have reflected upon with inconceivable uneasiness."

"Let it now cease," cried she; "since I have found in consequence of the incident you regret, many valuable and dear friends, amongst whom is the Baroness Hartsen. Had I not been induced to leave the neighbourhood of Narva, the daughter of the beneficent Count and Countess Rectzizi might still have remained in captivity, and the dear and worthy Leuhaupt's have languished for a longer period in banishment at Casan."

"Captain Lumerski," said Madame Hartsen, "pardon me the little embarrassment I have given you in consequence of the explanation I have forced you into, since it will remove from the minds of two very good sort of people, Phedora and yourself, any little doubt or reserve you might otherwise have mutually retained. She will forgive you in compliment to her friend Catherine Leuhaupt, for whom you have manifested so steady an attachment; and thus
assured

assured of her pardon, you may present yourself to your mistress with a better grace, than if you were laden with the anger and resentment of her adopted sister."

"Will you dear Phedora," asked Lumeriski, "grant me your entire forgiveness?"

She readily assented; and then inquired if his regiment were going to Moscow without delay.

"It is," he replied, "but I fear the pleasure of meeting the good Leuhaupts will be damped, by the abhorrence they must feel for one who appeared to slight their Rubenski in distress."

"There will not be any occasion to mention the circumstance you allude to," said Phedora.

"I mean not to conceal it from them," he answered; "but surely they must already have heard of it, without guessing the palliating motive by which I was actuated: however ridiculous it may be," glancing at the
the

the Baronefs who fmiled, "I would be content to be laughed at rather than detefted."

"How can they have heard it?" asked Phedora with furprife.

"Did you not fee Ivan at Mofcow?" refumed he: "you mentioned to him no doubt the mifcreant Lumerski, and the conduct which led you to quit his protection?"

"No," returned Phedora, "I merely faid that an accident had feparated me from you, when I fell into the hands of the Cofacks."

He warmly thanked her for this inftance of goodnefs and moderation, and expreffing much curiofity to know what had befallen her from the time fhe had fo indignantly left him, fhe briefly related the incidents that had placed her fo happily in the family of Count Rectzizi: but her fentences then grew extremely confufed, and fhe was very much diftreffed to proceed, when the entrance of Jalgourouki relieved her embarrassment, and faved

saved Madame Hartfen the trouble of assisting to make out the rest of the tale.

The Baronefs introduced Lumerfski to the Rufs, whose solemnity was heightened by a secret difpleafure at the unexpected appearance of a handsome young man in the company of Phedora; and his haughty looks gave fo much umbrage to the pride of Lumerfski, that he could not be prevailed upon to accept the invitation of Madame Hartfen to partake her dinner, when he found that Jalgourouki attended it. Before he left the room however, Phedora entreated to fee him the next morning, as fhe had a thoufand commiffions and meffages to entruf to him, for Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine, which fhe had not had leifure to charge the turbulent Ivan with.

The Baronefs obferved the fecret difpleafure of her Rufs protector, and as fhe always thought it was extremely lawful to extract amufement from the follies and perverseneffes

of mankind, her hints, questions and inuendos nearly put the august Jalgourouki into a passion; and at length the high commendations she took it into her head to bestow upon the almost unknown Lumeriski, drove him out of the room. Madame Hartfen then without any compunction enjoyed his defeat, and was excessively triumphant and delighted that she had had the power of discomposing his phlegm.

Phedora spent the principal part of the night in writing to Catherine, and arranging a few presents she meant to send her by Lumeriski; these she had intended to leave with Ivan, but he invariably refused to listen to any instruction or request which their separation compelled her to make concerning his father and sister, because the subject gave him pain, and he always entreated her to defer it until the parting moment. The last evening she had passed at Moscow, she offered to entrust him with a few memorials of her friendship for Catherine: "I will take them to-morrow,"

to-morrow," cried he, sickening at the idea of her departure. On the morrow however, by a mistake of the Baron, they were not left for him: Phedora had been grieved and mortified by the accident, and now felt proportionably delighted with an opportunity of executing her generous intention.

When the Baronefs arose, she found her busily employed, and anxious lest she should not accomplish every thing she wished to do before Lumerski called: he had informed them that his regiment marched forward early on that day, and that it would probably reach Moscow in about a week. When he made his appearance to receive the commands of Phedora, she had already arranged her little packets to her satisfaction, and immediately presented them to Lumerski, with her letters to Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine, and a billet for Ivan.

Madame Hartfen happened not to be present, and Lumerski eagerly seized the opportunity

tunity of asking her a few questions relating to Cassimir Rectzizi. Her replies were short and confused, and her air embarrassed: he had before noticed her change of countenance at the name of his friend, and amidst some conjectures he hastily formed, it was natural that the idea of opposition on the part of the Count and Countess to the wishes of their son, should occur. The inquiries of Lumerski concerning their disposition and temper had been answered by Phedora with the veneration that always accompanied their names when pronounced by her, and he was disappointed of the hints he had expected to gather from thence.

“Tell me,” said Lumerski, after considering a moment—“for certainly Cassimir informed you, how did our worthy Leu-haupts pass the tedious hours at Casan?”

“I had not an opportunity of learning,” replied she blushing a deep red.

“No! that is strange indeed! did I not understand that you resided at the house of

the

the Count Rectzizi? was not Cassimir under the same roof?"

"Yes—but he was very seldom at home."

"Still I should suppose the tender interest you take in the welfare of our friends, would have induced you to seek an opportunity for an inquiry so natural."

"I wished it earnestly," replied she; "but he was perpetually absent, and his manner when I did see him was so altered, so—he was not the same Rectzizi," added she timidly, "I knew in Livonia. I had determined more than once, to entreat him to indulge me with some information of those dearest and best of creatures: I longed to hear of their employments, their relaxations, if indeed they had any, and how they had borne their cruel journey: but when these questions hovered on my lips, his repulsive mien and his eagerness to hurry away always prevented them."

"This portrait surely does not resemble Rectzizi!" exclaimed Lumerski: "he must indeed be strangely altered if it does! were

you acquainted with any reason for such a change?"

"No—I believe not—I think—I did not hear any," she replied in great confusion.

"Have you seen him lately, Phedora?"

"The last time I saw him was at the house of the Baroness, a few versts from Moscow: he came there to resign a deposit his generous mother had placed in his hands for my subsistence, and appeared even then very much displeased with me: yet his words were kind, for he seemed to expect with impatience the arrival of Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine at Moscow, and mentioned it as a wish that tended to gratify my earnest inclination to behold them again. I believe however he thinks me selfish and ungrateful, for he hinted to me what my own heart would have dictated without a prompter, that I ought to share the bounty of the Count and Countess with those dear and revered friends. Heaven knows that were the produce of the Siberian mines to become mine, I should vest it all with transport in the hands of Mr. Leuhaupt.

haupt. I received his intimation with all the ready alacrity I felt to comply with it; but even this appeared to aggravate his anger, and he dropt the cold civility of manner he had hitherto used, for the severest looks of contempt and indignation his countenance could assume.—I have not seen him from that moment?"

Phedora concluded with a deep sigh, and the tears started into her eyes. Lumerski mused a short time on what he had heard, and was beginning some observation when the Baroness entered.

The conversation then became lively and general; but the regiment drawing up before the windows in readiness to march, soon compelled Lumerski to take his leave. Phedora flew after him as he quitted the room, with another message, another remembrance, and when he was beyond recal, she recollected that there was still something forgotten.

“ Console yourself my dear Rubenski,” said the Baroness, interrupting her lamentation; “ if Lumerski had remained here a week, depend upon it the same accident would have happened : for your ardent affection for these good people, would still have made you suppose some kindness had been neglected which you had the power of shewing them. For my part, I am at present extremely concerned to devise some plan to amuse ourselves in this unhappy place; neither can I imagine what we can possibly do, unless we procure some sticks and give Jalgourouki the battogen every day to enliven us: as he is a Russian he cannot object to this agreeable ceremony, and then we should have an opportunity of observing if it is in the power of those gloomy features to look more doleful.”

“ It is really a very good-natured expedient,” said Phedora, “ and I should suppose he will consent to it without a moment of hesitation.”

“ I commission

"I commission you," replied Madame Hartfen, "to try that point."

Jalgourouki entering a few minutes after, the Baronefs assuming an air highly interested in the question she was going to ask, exclaimed, "My dear Prince, our little Rubenski wishes to know at what price you will receive twenty strokes of a cane from her hand?"

The Rus was for a moment disconcerted, but rallying his spirits with an air of greater animation than Madame Hartfen had yet seen him assume, "As a compensation," cried he, "I must afterwards receive the hand that gave them."

The Baronefs had not expected so ready a reply: she cast a look at Phedora, whose countenance expressed all the vexation she really felt, at the gallantry her lively friend had extorted from Jalgourouki.

“ I am afraid,” said Madame Hartfen, “ your demand would be thought exorbitant: consider, twenty strokes of a cane are soon given and received. I dare say neither your father nor your grandfather would have thought any thing of it; for I am told the Czar Alexis was not very sparing of this kind of discipline.”

The Rufs now seemed half offended, and the Baronefs who did not chuse to give him serious umbrage, soon contrived to make him forget the inuendo. From this moment however, his attentions to Phedora became more pointed, and Madame Hartfen far from relieving the embarrassment this circumstance gave her, took every opportunity of tormenting her, by insisting upon being present at the Rufs contract of marriage which must soon take place between herself and the illustrious Jalgourouki. Phedora was much hurt at the unconcern the Baronefs persisted in manifesting for the uneasiness she gave her, and at length ventured to express it to her.

“ And

"And you really do not see," returned she, "my motive for persecuting you, as you call it? I must therefore my dear Phedora, explain it. I have begun for some time to perceive that the looks of Jalgourouki, when they point to you, are very formidable: and as I know from positive proof that you regard a little gallantry from some sort of people with a great deal of horror, as the unhappy effort of the poor Baron witnessed, I intended to prepare you for the impending storm, by gently tapping your nose with a few hailstones, to warn you of the rattling shower you must shortly expect about your ears. Seriously my little friend, I did not wish you to make an object of uneasiness of a ridiculous circumstance that should not give you any concern. And just at this moment, as he may be of some use to us, we must not discard him, whatever he may think proper to distil from his solemn imagination: do not mistake me however, I cannot advise you to dissemble any approbation you do not feel, and to avoid these two

disagreeable extremities, the best expedient I can think of, is to jest away the dreaded explanation."

Phedora was not very well satisfied with the reasoning of the Baroness, but she had no choice but of submitting with as good a grace as she could assume, or of being perhaps implicated in the amusement she seemed so desirous of extracting from the poor Rusa.

Her railleries which he appeared to dread most astonishingly, averted however the storm she had foretold, and Jalgourouki contented himself with continuing to Phedora those symptoms of attachment, which had first attracted the notice of Madame Hartsen.

CHAP. V.

—————“ They——”
“ Mistook a swelling current for a ford ——”
“ ——At length her courser plung’d
“ And threw her off, the waves whelm’d o’er her.”

AT the end of ten days, the Baroneſs became heartily tired of her reſidence in a place not only deſtitute of every object to amuſe the mind, but of every convenience and comfort; and reſolved to venture forward in the hope of reaching ſome town in Meiſlaw, on the frontiers of Luthuania. Phedora readily concurred in this deſign, and the remonſtrances of Jalgourouki, who repreſented the dangers they muſt inevitably meet, were not at all likely to be ſucceſſful, becauſe he was ſoon tired of the exertion it required
to

to make them, and the Baronefs was pre-determined. They fet off therefore the next morning in the Rufs carriage, attended by the fervants of Madame Hartfen and thofe of the Prince, who had taken the precaution of hiring a guide well acquainted with the country.

For the firft four and twenty hours, their progrefs was interrupted only by difficulties which labour and patience could overcome: but they had only advanced twenty miles; and to reft the horfes, of which they had but one change, they were then compelled to remain a few hours more at a wretched Rufs inn, where they were affured they could not proceed to Meiffaw without extreme danger.

At this intelligence the Baronefs bit her lip and looked at Phedora, whofe countenance gave no fymptom of terror or unwillingnefs to fhare any peril her friend chofe to encounter: Jalgourouki was filent, and
Madame

Madame Hartfen remained a few moments in deep reflection.

"We cannot stay here," exclaimed she, "without a tolerable certainty of being starved!"

"If we return again," observed Phedora, "we may yet be detained a month longer."

"Are you inclined Prince," resumed the Baroness, "to go back to the town we have quitted?"

Jalgourouki appeared rather offended at this question, and without replying to it, made the same demand to her.

"Why I confess," returned Madame Hartfen, "I am not by any means enamoured of the notion of spending five or six weeks at that dreary place: what is your opinion Phedora?"

"Let us advance," cried she with intrepidity.

"Oh

“ Oh delightful !” exclaimed the Baroness, “ this little heroine charms me ! well then,” added she, turning to the Russ, “ do you accompany us ?”

“ I will not be deterred,” replied he angrily, “ even by the offensive insinuation that question implies.”

“ Pardon me,” returned the Baroness, “ I meant not the smallest insinuation which should excite your displeasure : but as I knew your judgment was not with us in our hazardous expedition (I acknowledge it rather a rash one) I merely desired to intimate with the utmost humility, that I intended to act in opposition to it.”

Jalgourouki made no reply, and Madame Hartsen ordered the horses to be put to the carriage : but as she was walking to it, she suddenly stooped, and turning to Phedora, “ Shall we,” cried she, “ go on ?”

Phedora, who really felt all the security her prompt resolution had displayed, and imagined

gined that the utmost mischief which could happen, would be the necessity of riding a few versts on horseback, or walking them in the mud, or wading a few paces in a rivulet formed by the melted snow, still assented with the same cheerfulness. The unsubdued indignation of Jalgourouki kept him silent, and again Madame Hartsen stepped forward.

For six or seven versts, though the carriage advanced but slowly yet it was not in any danger. But at length its progress was impeded by a road apparently so impassable, that the driver and guide both halted to contemplate the hazard they must run by plunging into it. The way was hallowed in the middle, and from a hill above a torrent poured with rapidity, threatening to overthrow the travellers in the carriage, should they attempt to pass it.

Madame Hartsen on viewing this impediment, glanced her eyes towards Jalgourouki, to discover if he appeared to regard her with
resentment

resentment or triumph; and notwithstanding the dilemma to which her obstinate perseverance had reduced her, she could not forbear smiling at the woeful expression his countenance exhibited: fortunately his attention was too much occupied to observe this, and he immediately mounted his horse to examine the difficulty that presented itself.

“ My dear Phedora,” exclaimed the Baroness when he could no longer hear her, “ I fear I have been wrong; and I shall certainly have the condescension to acknowledge it to Jalgourouki, unless he should first wisely endeavour to convince me of it by profound argument. If we are really obliged to turn back, I must not presume to rally our Russian companion during the tedious month we may remain in his odious country.”

“ Shall I call to him Madam?” asked Phedora.

“ No; let us first hear if it is not possible to proceed.”

Jalgourouki

Jalgourouki now returned to the side of the carriage, and informed them that the road was only passable on horseback : but if they would venture it thus, the empty carriage should be hazarded across the torrent. The Baroness hesitated a few minutes, and at length agreed to the proposal, since no personal danger attended it. Phedora and herself were placed upon horses belonging to Jalgourouki, whose servants dismounted to conduct them by the bridle, and the female attendant was disposed of behind one of Madame Hartsen's domestics.

. In a few minutes they arrived in safety by a narrow causeway, to a hill that overlooked the road. The heavy machine they had quitted, was then unloaded of the provisions it was furnished with, as the loss of these would have been of serious consequence to a troop of above a dozen people, who were not likely to meet in three or four days, with more than as many pounds of wretched bread and
the

the same quantity of dried fish, in the huts they passed.

A pair of additional horses were fastened to the carriage, and it advanced to the impetuous stream: the Baroness and Phedora looking on with an anxiety Jalgourouki shared in. When it had been dragged with some difficulty to the middle of the torrent, the horses were overpowered by its rapidity, and the efforts of the drivers to urge them forward were ineffectual. They struggled for some time with incredible labour, and would have at length sunk beneath the toil, had not the Baroness, whose compassion was irresistably excited, insisted that they should be disengaged if possible from the harness: her servants and those of the Prince assisted in this task; but one of the horses fell before they could accomplish it, and perished in spite of every effort they could use.

A consultation was now held upon the possibility of proceeding, and the necessity of returning

returning from whence they came : Jalgou-rouki advised the latter ; but Madame Hartfen urged that when they should arrive at the hut they stopt at in the morning, they would still have fifty versts to travel, to reach the town they had quitted. “ And perhaps,” added she, “ if we continue to advance, we may find some place to shelter us for a few days, at a less distance.”

The guide was consulted upon this point, who affirmed very positively that a small town lay about thirty versts to the west, and a baiting place exactly in the midway. Jalgou-rouki then gave directions to the servants to take from the carriage all that it contained of value : but the commission appeared to them so dangerous, for the machine was now overturned and more than half filled, that they hesitated to obey him. The Baroness would not suffer them to be compelled to an action their fears prevented them from performing with willingness ; and after some moments of argument, the guide and one of the drivers undertook

undertook to execute the command of Jalgourouki for a few rubles, which Madame Hartfen gave them very readily, though the Rus's remonstrated against the impudence of the demand, and her too easy compliance.

The horses which had been harnessed to the unhappy carriage, were now laden with the baggage it had contained, and the men who led those upon which the Baroness and Phedora were mounted, were to be relieved every two versts by others.

After this arrangement the travellers again began to move forward, but their progress was almost as slow as when it had been clogged by the machine they had left behind them; and two hours after sunset they had not attained the hut the guide had spoken of. Madame Hartfen and her young friend were now faint with hunger, for they had not tasted food since the morning dawn, and they were obliged to take a slight repast without dismounting.

As the night approached, they became extremely sensible of the cold dampness of the air, which even their furs could not exclude, and shortly after they had eaten their hasty meal, the rain poured down in torrents. Jalgourouki was now very impatient to arrive at the baiting place, but upon questioning the guide, he learnt to his infinite mortification, that the man had mistaken the distance, and they had still several versts to travel before they could have the comfort of seating themselves round a warm stove. In fact the day again broke upon them when they gained sight of it, and the poor beasts they rode, stumbled with weariness at every other step.

When the Baroness was taken from her horse, she was so stiff and cramped with the cold and remaining so long in a position she had not been accustomed to, that Jalgourouki was obliged to carry her to the hut, where she was laid upon a skin spread over some straw, and Phedora who had not suffered near
so

so much, assisted her woman to restore her to sensation.

When she was a little recovered, she turned to the Russ, who had displayed a very humane attention to her situation, and acknowledged that she deserved all the inconveniences she endured, as a very proper reward for the obstinacy with which she had resisted his advice. Jalgourouki was highly pleased with this little concession, especially as it was followed by another from the pretty mouth of Phedora, who confessed an equal share in the error: and in the self-satisfaction he experienced from the avowed superiority of his judgment, he forgot the disagreeable consequences into which they had plunged him and themselves by deviating from it.

It was some hours before Madame Hartsen recovered entirely from the numbness that had seized her limbs: and as Jalgourouki learnt from the people of the hut, that the town mentioned by the guide was still at
twenty

twenty versts distance, the Baroness resolved to remain where she was till day break on the following morning, that Phedora and herself might not be exposed to the chilling dews of evening, and those showers of rain which the departure of day generally brought on. She enquired concerning the situation of the town they wished to reach, and found that it was not more than sixty or seventy versts from the confines of the Palatinate of Meislaw: this intelligence renovated her spirits, and inspired her with fresh courage and strength. She then demanded if any travellers had passed from thence within the week: but this question was not easily answered; for neither the host nor hostess possessed sufficient curiosity to enquire which way their guests were going, nor from whence they came. They said however, that any person might reach the town in safety on horseback, as there were no deep vallies immediately in the road, nor was it crossed by any river, or had even a stream near it, except a small one which might possibly be swelled, but not so as to impede their

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passage. The Baroness was much pleased with this account; for her heart accused her of being the authoress of the inquietude the whole party could not but endure from many causes.

Early then the next day, Phedora and herself were again placed upon their horses, and again set out to encounter inclement skies, and fatigues ill-suited to their sex. Madame Hartsen, reflecting that her own obstinacy of opinion had brought the evil upon her head, resolved to suffer it with firmness and courage: she could not but admire the uncomplaining patience of Phedora, who met every difficulty with a cheerful mien, and endured every fatigue without repining. The Baroness called her a heroine, openly avowing that she meant to make her conduct upon this occasion the model of her own; and Jalgourouk eagerly joined in the commendation, though he lamented at the same time that Phedora, for the honour of Russia, was not born in the country.

At noon they took their meal as before, on horseback, for neither hut nor hovel appeared in sight to afford them a momentary shelter; and about an hour after, they descried the small river which the people at the baiting place had told them was rather more than half way. Phedora congratulated the Baroness that they had proceeded thus far; but in a few moments the guide stopt, and when they joined him, they found that what had been a small rill which traversed the road, and was supplied from this stream, was now swelled to an alarming size, and poured with wild fury upon the plain below, whose surface was completely deluged.

Jalgourouki looked aghast at this unforeseen and new impediment; and Madame Hartfen felt her composure rudely shocked: but her acknowledgement of error had quite subdued the Russ, and as he did not want personal courage, he had immediately determined to object no further to any thing she proposed, though for her sake as well as that

of Phedora, he shuddered at the perils they had seemed so resolutely to seek. He now ordered the guide and one of his own servants to aid him in endeavouring to discover the most fordable part of this impetuous rivulet, and having at length succeeded, he asked the Baroness if she would venture over.

“ Yes,” she replied ; “ but I must first insist that Phedora remains on this side until I am safely lodged on the opposite one : and then if it should happen that I unluckily lose my way, and glide down the stream, you must swear to me, Jalgourouki, that you will conduct her safe back to Moscow, and deliver her into the hands of her friend Mr. Leuhaupt.”

Phedora vehemently objected to this proposal.

“ I will accompany you,” she eagerly cried : “ let me ride by your side—I will share your fate.”

Madame

Madame Hartfen peremptorily decided however, that it should be as she had said, and the secret inclination of the Rufs, who trembled for the safety of Phedora, was equally for this plan. She was compelled therefore to submit; and Jalgourouki immediately disposed his people and those of the Baronefs in fuch a manner, that by the closeness of their union, they must break the force of the current: she rode in the center, and the Prince held the bridle of her horse and that of his own, whilst one of her servants guided it on the other side.

Phedora remained at the edge of the stream with a beating heart, putting up fervent petitions for the safety of her friend, who had already passed the most dangerous part, and nearly reached the opposite side, when the horse on which Phedora sat, impatient at being separated from his companions, with a sudden toss of the head, jerked his bridle from the hand of the man who held it, whose whole attention was fixed on the adven-

turous troop before him: the force of this unexpected motion threw him down with violence, and the animal then plunging with his rider into the current, soon lost his footing and was carried away with a rapidity he could not resist. Terrified as she was, Phedora still retained her presence of mind, though the voices of the men, and the piercing screams of the Barones, confirmed the imminence of the danger she was already too well assured of. She dared not however turn her head to take a last look at her friend, but kept her eyes steadily fixed upon the poor beast, who struggled to support himself above the torrent, which in a very short space had carried him across the plain; and she saw with an aggravation of terror, that a winding of the river she had congratulated the Barones on first beholding, joined the extremity of the valley, and united its agitated waves with the overflowing of the fatal rivulet, it thus at the same time supplied and received.

Every

Every slender hope of deliverance which her bosom had feebly cherished, now forsook her, and she was sensible that when the efforts of the animal that sustained her should cease, she must sink into the engulphing stream, and never more open her eyes to the light of day.

In such a moment, so agonising to humanity—to a heart beating strong with youth, health and animation, that of Phedora fondly turned back to the days of childhood and adolescence; it called upon the heaven opening before her, to reward the protectors of the widow and orphan: the names of Leuhaupt and Rectzizi mingled with the roaring of the torrent: that of Cassimir was sighed in softer accents, and her own ears were scarcely sensible of the sound.

The respiration of the poor beast now became more short and laboured, and he could hardly keep his working nostrils above the tide: Phedora perceived the gradual failure of his strength: another moment and

she was no more—again she called upon heaven to bless her benefactors and preservers. “The dashing of these impetuous waves,” murmured she, “mock the feeble efforts of my voice: but the great Eternal will deign to hear it, though mankind shall no more listen to the departing sound, nor answer my cries with the aid they call for.”

The loud breathing of the horse now amounted to agony, and Phedora looked round her with desperate intrepidity: at this moment a string by which she had been attached to the wretched animal by the care of Jalgourouki, burst, from the violent efforts of his lungs, and the waves soon displaced her from his back: one of her hands however, still held part of the bridle, and the other she had twisted in his mane. Her senses began to fail her, yet she again cast round her eyes for the means of deliverance; but every object swam before her sight; she saw, she heard nothing but the water that encompassed her: her ideas became confused and she was
sinking

sinking fast into forgetfulness, when a strong blow upon the forehead and a something which impeded her course, made her quit her hold.

Her recollection returned, and she saw before her the branch of a tree within her reach: it over-hung the stream, and she instinctively seized it though with a feeble hand: her heart again bounded with hope, when she found herself supported, though she knew not how, when she was sensible that the current had not power enough to drive her from the branch she clung to, and that it scarcely required the little strength she was still mistress of to maintain her situation: her courage revived with re-animation, and she was soon able to reflect with tolerable composure upon the expedients that presented themselves, to extricate her from the surrounding dangers, which from this slender mitigation lost a part of their horrors.

Her first effort was to endeavour to find a footing, and in doing this, she perceived that her cloaths had caught on something that jutted out beneath the water; and thus suspended her very easily with the assistance of the bough she held: she concluded that it must be one of the roots of the tree that waved its naked branches over her head; and her conjecture was well founded, for the river, swelled far beyond its usual limits, had washed away part of the earth that covered them. At length her feet with some difficulty rested upon one of these, and she crept slowly towards the trunk of the friendly tree which had been the means of her preservation.

The current had then still less power over her, and stepping upon a large root that was twisted above the rest, she found herself considerably raised, and had leisure to contemplate the scene around her. The poor animal who had drawn almost inevitable destruction both upon himself and her, was no longer in sight; but she observed something of considerable

considerable magnitude borne down the stream, from the plain she had been carried over: when this object approached, she discerned amidst a mass of ruins, large pieces of thatch and planks almost disjointed, which appeared to have formed part of a cottage: on some of these stood a ewe and its lamb, the principal, perhaps the only treasures of the unhappy owners of this little inundated habitation: the straw on which they had reposed, some bits of honeycomb, dried fish, and a large parcel of undressed hemp, glided with it down the stream.

Phedora regarded it all with a wistful eye, and felt her heart powerfully assailed by compassion when her imagination pictured the despair of the peasant and his destitute family; she recollected that she had a purse of rubles in her pocket, part of the donation of the Count Restzizi: its contents were indeed lightened, for she had sent one half of them to Catherine Leuhaupt; but the remainder would still be sufficient, she thought, to make

the poor people she so minutely figured in her fancy, happy in spite of their misfortunes.

But her ideas soon reverted to her own situation, which was indeed deplorable enough to have engaged her whole attention: her limbs began to be quite numbed with cold, and the sun was fast declining. The ground on that side of the tree next to the river had been entirely broken away, and formed on the other side a high bank which she was wholly unable to climb without assistance. From this bank the earth gradually rose in a gentle hill, covered at intervals with beech and fir: Phedora looked towards the eminence for the wished-for sight of some human being who could relieve and save her; but no moving figure gladdened her eyes—her blood crept languidly in her veins, and her soul sickened with protracted expectation—her head dropt upon her bosom and she would have quitted her hold, had not her muscles stiffened into an involuntary contraction.

From

From this stupor she was roused by a sound that boded deliverance: again she raised her eyes, and beheld a man hurrying down the slope, whose gestures and mien denoted all the agitation of grief and distraction. Phedora endeavoured in vain to claim his assistance, for her voice died away in low murmurs, whilst the quick fluttering of her heart almost stopt her respiration.

The stranger still advanced towards the river, and once more she essayed to attract his notice, but without success. She now dreaded lest he should quit the spot, and leave her to a fate she could from that moment no longer doubt, and this horrible idea extorted from her a sudden cry of anguish and despair: the man started at the sound, and looking round for the person who had uttered it, beheld Phedora, with an expression of surprise and compassion in his countenance, that chased from it every other emotion.

He

He stooped over the bank to examine her situation, and found that he could not release her from it unless he had a cord of some kind to draw her up by.

“Have courage and patience,” exclaimed he in the Russ language, “whilst I run to obtain the means of saving you!”

He then darted away without waiting her answer, and she saw him mount the hill he had descended. His injunction had not the effect he had wished to give it, for when Phedora lost sight of him, she sunk into despondency: half an hour elapsed and he returned not—she then bitterly accused him of having abandoned her, whilst tears of anguish started from her eyes.

Her impatience however had wronged him; for a few minutes after, she again beheld him hastening down the slope: he had procured a cord twisted round with bands of straw and after a little difficulty, succeeded in
throwing

throwing it round her. He then desired her to disengage her hands from the bough she clung to, but it was only after a number of efforts that she could follow this direction, from the extreme numbness of her joints. At length her deliverer effected his purpose, and laid her half lifeless on the bank, where unable to move, she could only inarticulately murmur her ardent thanks to heaven and to him. The man drew from his bosom a small bottle made of a stiffened skin, and poured down her throat part of the liquor it contained.

Phedora was almost strangled with the strength of the spirit she was thus compelled to swallow; but when this inconvenience was past, she felt her blood glow with returning warmth, and her limbs were no longer useless. The compassionate stranger assisted her to rise; but before he led her to the summit of the hill, where she imagined his habitation to be, he turned to the rapid stream from whence he had drawn her, and casting his eyes

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wildly

wildly over it, he then raised them to heaven, and struck his bosom as in despair.

Phedora received with thankfulness his proffered aid, without which she could scarcely have attained the eminence; the man told her, she had then half a verst further to go, to reach a hut where he would procure her some assistance

“As for me,” exclaimed he, “I have now no roof to shelter you!—my house, my all is swept away by the merciless flood, and my children have not bread to eat!”

“Ah heaven!” cried Phedora, “was it your cottage I saw, your sheep——.”

“When,” interrupted he eagerly, “when did they pass you? perhaps I may yet snatch some remnant of my little stock from the over-whelming torrent!”

He then pointed out to her notice the hut he had spoken of, and was flying again

towards the stream, when Phedora arrested his steps.

“ Stay,” she cried, “ do not hazard your life for any thing a few rubles will purchase : you have preserved mine, and this action of compassionate charity, to perform which you forgot your own misfortunes, shall be recompenced to the extent of my feeble gratitude. Take this money, and as far as it will go, replace the comforts you have lost.”

The man gazed earnestly at her, with eyes in which renovated hope was painted, and fixed them on the rubles she displayed, with astonishment and transport.

“ My children ! my mother ! my poor Ottokefa !” exclaimed he. Then taking the arm of Phedora, he hurried her forward, and they soon reached the hut. Here she beheld the wretched family of her preserver : they were mingled with the owners of the little habitation, who had hospitably received them,
but

but they were easily distinguished by the anguish and despair depicted in their drooping faces.

“Ottokefa,” cried the man as he led in Phedora, “be comforted!—do not weep my mother! heaven has not deserted us—the young stranger I have saved, will supply our wants for the present, and my labour shall prevent them for the future.”

Phedora confirmed his assertion, by holding out the rubles for his acceptance; but he was not so eager to take them, as to show them to his wife and mother. The latter appeared to be a woman much advanced in years; but her countenance was still fine, and very expressive: she looked steadily at Phedora for a few minutes and the tears started into her eyes; she spoke not however, but appeared in deep reflection, and at length they dropped upon her cheeks.

Phedora

Phedora went up to the venerable gazer with an involuntary respect, and would have embraced her but that she recollected her dripping garments. Ottokesa remarked them too, and bade her husband retire, whilst they were hung to dry about the stove which was almost the only piece of furniture the cottage contained: but Phedora was too anxious to let the Baronefs know by some means of her existence and safety, not to wish first to consult her deliverer upon this point. She informed him of the direction they had travelled in, and describing the place where the disaster had happened to her, entreated him to discover if her friends were at any of the villages round.

He readily undertook to visit them all himself for this purpose, and though it was now almost evening, he sat off directly, being furnished by Phedora with a piece of money to buy some provisions and necessaries for the family, for he would not by any means be prevailed upon to take all the rubles.

There

There was no other man in the hut, and Ottokefa then stript off the wet cloaths of her guest, calling upon the mistress of the little mansion to make up the stove fire. Phedora's hair was braided in the Russian fashion, and the good peasant having assisted her to loosen it, and wiped with care every wavy tress, desired her venerable mother to admire with her its glossy beauty : but not receiving any answer, she turned suddenly towards her, and beheld her in tears.

“ This beautiful young Russ,” said the old matron in the Polish language, “ reminds me Ottokefa, of those I would forget. When I last saw my Czerkowi, then a boy of ten years old, he looked—Oh how well I remember his sweet face, his fine hair—he looked as she does now. See—she weeps—he wept too, and fixed his eyes upon me when his mother led him away, in the same manner as she regards me at this moment.”

The

The young children of Ottokesa now hung about their ancient parent, sharing in the distress she visibly felt.

“Look another way, pretty Rufs,” said the eldest to Phedora, “and do not make us cry.”

She obeyed this innocent injunction, and began braiding up her hair, whilst the old woman continued to gaze upon her with earnest attention. Her cloaths were soon dried, excepting the outside garment, which was lined with fur, and she was supplied with an humbler one by the woman.

Soon after she had resumed her dress, the master of the hut entered it, and his wife related to him, with many marks of compassion, the loss his neighbours had sustained from the inundation.

“But where,” cried he, “is Rubenski?”—Phedora started—“and who,” he added, “is this stranger?”

“Rubenski

“Rubenski saved her from the flood,” cried Ottokesa, “and he is gone to the villages round, to seek her friends, who may think her lost in it.”

“Rubenski!” repeated Phedora much surprised; “is your husband called Rubenski?”

“That is the name of my son,” cried the old matron eagerly; “mine is Matheowna—tell me, have you heard these names? do you know the young Count Czerskowi?”

“I know not any one of that title,” replied Phedora; “but I too am called Rubenski, and thence arose my exclamation.”

Matheowna appeared disappointed, and was silent.

The good natured hostess now produced what she intended should be a meal for all her guests: it was her whole stock of provisions, though it would have scarcely been more than sufficient for her husband and herself. Phedora observed this, and declined to partake

partake of the repast, which it was easy to see Ottokesa and her venerable mother also shared unwillingly: but the poor children, who had not eaten the whole day, devoured the food set before them, and recollecting that their father had likewise fasted, began wishing for his return.

Phedora was still more anxious for it; for she dreaded the probability of her being left with the cottagers, from the little hopes the Baroness and Jalgourouki could entertain of her existence, which might prevent them from staying long enough in the environs of the place, to learn that her life had been preserved. Her inquietude did not pass unnoticed, and the good old Matheowna enquiring the cause of it, Phedora gently hinted her fears, that her providential deliverance might not be discovered by her friends, before they were induced to prosecute their journey.

Ottokesa looked at her host, as if she wished him to offer his assistance in making
the

the travellers acquainted with the circumstance: but he contented himself with assuring Phedora, that as the flood hourly encreased, it would be impossible to advance in either road, two versts from the next village, so that her companions must remain in the neighbourhood.

In about two hours Rubenski her preserver, returned to the cottage, and confirmed the intelligence: he had been to one village and was proceeding to another, but was prevented by the rising of the torrent, which since the morning, had covered the fields he was to have passed through to reach it. He had not met with any one who had seen the little troop he enquired for, and having purchased provisions, and some straw to serve for the purpose of repose, he was compelled to measure back his way with this unsatisfactory news, which Phedora heard in silent uneasiness.

She

She was by this time unable to sustain herself: a heavy pain had seized her limbs, and her head was light and confused. She imagined at first, that the giddiness was the effect of the blow she had received upon the forehead, as it had much discoloured it, but was soon convinced that it proceeded from a more serious cause, when she found it accompanied by shiverings which suddenly changed to a feverish heat. She was then obliged to lay down in a corner of the hut, which had only one partition in it, upon a bed composed of part of the straw Rubenski had bought, and a skin thrown over it. In the night she slept little; and when her eyes closed, her imagination wandered to the scenes of the preceding day, which floated before it with even aggravated horrors. She screamed for help, and her voice brought Ottokesa to her side, who enquired kindly into her ailments.

The accents awakened Phedora, and gazing by the assistance of a strong twilight round the miserable cabin, where all the

females were huddled together, her recollection could not aid her to discover by what means she had become an inmate with them. She found however that her mouth was excessively parched, and instinctively asked for water, which the woman was obliged to go into the other division of the hut to obtain: a few minutes after she had drank it, she sunk again into an unquiet doze, and again the same images of terror assailed her.

At day-break she started up with a hurried and agitated motion, and seeing the good old Matheowna watching over her, she enquired very earnestly for the Baroneſs Hartſen.

“ I know her not my child,” replied the worthy creature tenderly, “ calm your mind, and try to ſleep longer.”

“ No no !” exclaimed Phedora wildly, “ I muſt haſten after the Baroneſs, or the ſtream that bore me I know not where, will ſeparate us for ever.”

Then

Then seeming to recollect herself, "Is your son come back?" she eagerly asked: "wherefore did you name him Rubenski? he is not my father—my father went first, and then my mother followed, and then my little companions—but Catherine was saved—then followed the only parent death had left me, and then he seized Mrs. Leuhaupt, and now," added she still more wildly, "I too am going; yet let me first see the Baroness, or it will swallow me up—look, look! he can swim no longer, and I must sink with him!"

The venerable matron now perceived that her imagination was disordered, and her frame equally deranged: and she called Ottokesa to consult upon what they could do to relieve the lovely patient. Rubenski was then added to the party; but he could only lament, that amidst his little property which had been washed away, he had lost his stock of a medicinal root, the produce of the country, which he took himself and gave to his family as a remedy for every kind of

L 2 sickness.

sickness. He recommended however to his wife and mother to keep Phedora as quiet as possible and to soothe instead of contradicting her frenzy. Ottokesa offered her food, but she rejected it with abhorrence and again asked for water: it was brought to her in a small quantity and she drank it as before with haste and eagerness. A violent shivering followed, succeeded by a burning heat, which lasted all day, and towards evening the delirium increased.

Ottokesa and the friendly hostess, then watched beside her in turns; and in the morning her strength appeared almost exhausted. Rubenski had spent the whole day in searching for some of the root he used as an universal specific, but without success; on the following morning however he was more fortunate, and hastening back to the hut with his prize, boiled it in some water, and gave the decoction to Phedora when she called for any liquid. Either her constitution immediately after this, surmounted without aid the shock

it had received, or the medicine had really the sovereign powers ascribed to it by the credulous Rubenski; for she gradually recovered from the time she had taken it: her senses returned, and the fever left her.

The good old Matheowna, who had shed many tears during the violence of her disorder, and often repeated the name of Czerskowi as she hung over her in great affliction, rejoiced excessively in the favourable change. Phedora at length raised herself from her uneasy couch, with a full recollection of all that had happened to her previous to her indisposition; and with this returning knowledge of the past, her eagerness to obtain some information of the Baroness redoubled.

Rubenski assured her that the flood was far from abating, and it was yet impossible that her fellow-travellers should have quitted the neighbourhood: she would not be pacified however, unless he went forth every two or three hours to, bring her word if the torrent

were lessened or increased, and he good-humouredly complied with her wish, though he was well persuaded of its inefficacy.

Her strength slowly re-established, notwithstanding the wretchedness of her accommodation, and when she was tolerably recovered, she would not be prevented by the representations of Ottokesa and her venerable mother, from traversing the humid ground, to gaze at the winding impetuous stream which had snatched her from the protection of the amiable Baroness. She watched its limits with the strictest observation, and at length was convinced that it gradually sunk within them: she flew back to the hut to call Rubenski, and show him this long wished-for change. He was persuaded that she was right, and promised when the flood had sufficiently decreased, not to lose a moment in searching for her friends.

From this time Phedora could scarcely be dragged from the edge of the stream which she

she incessantly regarded with the most eager impatience, and Rubenski was repeatedly questioned to know if yet he could not venture to the villages from which they had been excluded all communication. Importuned by her earnest entreaties, he determined against his judgment to try once more if he could not reach a little cluster of huts at about a verst distant, amongst which he supposed the fellow travellers of Phedora had taken shelter. but his effort was vain, for he found the meads still almost wholly overflowed, and it was impossible to pass them without incurring a danger, the recollection of his family whose only support he was, prevented him from encountering.

In the evening of the same day the torrent sunk rapidly, and the inquietude of Phedora increased, lest the Baroness, whose adventurous disposition she now deplored, should press forward towards Luthuania. She recollected that her friend had the advantage of horses, which would facilitate her departure ; and the

sun which now began to shine with reviving cheerfulness, and the first faint notes of a few early birds, who timidly ventured their song, as though they had forgotten their own powers by disuse, seemed to her the signals of her continued and cruel separation from Madame Hartsen, who would be solicitous, she thought, to turn her back upon a country so inhospitable and calamitous.

She now sighs for my imaginary fate," cried Phedora, giving utterance to her thoughts; "and her generous heart accuses her with bitterness of having caused it. Would to heaven, I could bid her regrets to cease, and spring into her arms like one risen from the dead: with what animated pleasure would she not welcome me!—but perhaps I shall never see her more—the capricious destiny which delights to snatch from me those blessings she bestows still more unexpectedly, may now no more pour her partial scale of sudden and unlooked-for favours, on my head: to the obscurity in which I was born I
am

am again returned—perhaps I may die in it—yet no,” she added with energy, “I will rather die in an ineffectual effort to re-unite myself to my Catherine and Mr. Leuhaupt! and should I be left with these people, worthy as they appear to be, when the summer sun bids these terrors to cease, I will resume the courage I have almost lost in the indulgence of idle luxury, and use the powers nature has given me to remove from place to place. I may rush into dangers it is true; but what is the fear or the existence of local evil, to a life of misery, regret, and unavailing remembrance of past happiness!”

On the following morning, Rubenski observing how much the river had lessened, conceived hopes of being able to satisfy the uneasy impatience of Phedora, by attaining the far side of the land that had been overflowed, from whence, if the stream was not very rapid, a boat might pass to the opposite shore. The owner of the cottage, who had beheld with great calmness the anxiety of the

young stranger, when he knew it could not be relieved, now that there were reasonable hopes of success, very readily offered to accompany his friend and assist his purpose.

The proposition was thankfully received and they departed together, whilst Matheowna and the wife of Rubenski could scarcely prevent Phedora from following them, by representing that her presence would add to the difficulties they might meet with, as there were many places the men could perhaps pass, which would be to her insuperable impediments. In the utmost trepidation of mind, she was therefore compelled to await their return, for the intelligence she at once longed and dreaded to hear.

It was considerably past noon when Rubenski and his companion re-appeared, and they had not very pleasing news to communicate. They had traversed the meads without danger, and arrived at the village beyond them; but here they had found the river still too

much swelled, and too rapid to allow them a safe passage. Rubenski however, who was an excellent swimmer, proposed to leave his friend behind, and entrust himself to the current in the ferry-boat belonging in common to the peasants of the place : but this intention was prevented by some of the villagers who had discovered it, because they feared the loss of their boat would be the inevitable consequence of it.

Thus checked in his plan, Rubenski could do nothing more than ask of the people about, if they had beheld any strangers on the opposite shore. They replied that they had seen several horsemen many days back, riding furiously up and down the bank, whom they had supposed to be a great Boyard and his attendants, from the magnificent furs the principal seemed to be clad with, and the orders he appeared to give to the rest. "Notwithstanding the roaring of the torrent," said one of the peasants, "by repeated questions which they tore their lungs in

shouting out, they enquired if we had seen a woman on horseback carried down the stream. And then we tried in our turn, to make them hear that we had seen a horse carried along with the tide, but no rider. And then the Boyard galloped away, and went searching elsewhere, for we saw him follow the course of the river for near two versts. Some days after this the Boyard's lady stood on the opposite bank, waiting for some of us to go and answer the questions she made her servants ask us: and we told them again that we had only seen the horse, and that he was spent and just sinking. Then the lady wrung her hands, and seemed to cry bitterly; and the Boyard came and took her away, and we only caught a sight of them once since then, about three days ago."

When Rubenski heard this narrative, he resolved to watch by the side of the river, in the hope of seeing the lady, who could not, he concluded, be any other than the friend of Phedora. After he had waited however, for
sometime,

sometime, he recollected the agitation of mind his fair name-sake was in, and would have persuaded his companion to return to the hut with the news he had already heard : but the man who experienced for Rubenski all the regard he was capable of feeling, feared he would hazard some too adventurous step if he were left to himself, and refused to go home without him : they continued waiting therefore several hours, and then the husband of Ottokesa, in compassion to the sufferings of Phedora, measured back his way, having left an injunction with the peasants he had seen, not to quit the river side until his return ; which they readily promised in the hope of being rewarded for their trouble by the Boyard's lady, for the information Rubenski had imparted to them, of the existence of the young woman she sought.

Phedora became half frantic with impatience when she heard this narrative, and was restrained only by force from trying to reach the village, that she might show herself to the
people

people on the opposite bank of the stream, and prevent the departure of Madame Hartfen, who had made a personal enquiry, she imagined, as a last effort to recover her little friend, and would quit the country, as soon as it was possible to travel. The venerable Matheowna endeavoured to allay her inquietude, by promising that she should accompany her son to the village at day-break.

“ But now—at this moment, she is going perhaps,” exclaimed Phedora, “ and I shall never see her more—or any of those dear friends my heart yearns after !”

Her eager importunities were not to be withstood: Rubenski who had promised the peasants that he would not be long absent, at length consented to take her with him; and the patience of his companion not being yet worn out, he agreed to assist in conveying Phedora over the water which yet rested in the low parts of the meads.

Ottokesa

Ottokefa and her mother charged them with repeated adjurations to bring her back in safety; and the anxious Phedora embracing the women with grateful affection, and kissing each of the children, who ran out to see her depart, set off with a haste her conductors could hardly equal: yet when she had reached the desired spot, no further tidings could be gathered of the Boyard and his lady, notwithstanding the strict watch the peasants had kept.

She walked up and down the bank with a hasty and agitated step, clasping her hands and calling upon Madame Hartfen by the tenderest names; but no sound replied to her voice, except the dashing of the water, which had now subsided into a gentler murmur: her heart then conceived the disappointment she was doomed to bear, and palpitated with anguish, though it feebly nourished the lingering hope, that will still live, until certainty has wholly and forever crushed it. She enquired when the boat would be permitted
to

to cross the stream, but could not receive a definitive answer. The female peasants now run out to offer her all the local accommodation it was in their power to afford: but Phedora was little inclined to profit by their hospitality, and had not Rubenski and his companion prevented her, she would have passed the night by the river side.

Reluctantly she at length entered one of the cottages, and laid herself down upon a skin spread over some straw, to endeavour to repose: but sleep fled her eye-lids, and having spent some hours in anxious watchfulness, she arose at peep of dawn, and leaving her hosts still stretched upon their humble beds, stole out to examine if the river had fallen, and found it in reality less rapid and much decreased; yet she was compelled to wait the appearance of Rubenski before any thing could be done, for she knew not where to seek him: his friend had returned to his own hut, to quiet the alarms the women would feel at the protracted stay of the young stranger;

stranger; but he had remained with her at the village, that her impatience might not lead her to destruction.

Phedora wandered about a considerable time, before she saw a few stragglers creeping from their huts to begin their daily labour: she enquired of them in which cottage Rubenski was to be found, and when he appeared, she took him to the river and eagerly showing him how much it was lessened, asked if the peasants would now lend their boat to convey her over. Rubenski made the enquiry and it was in part only complied with; for she was not permitted to accompany him, not from motives of tenderness to her, but that his attention should be solely directed to the preservation of the boat, should the stream overpower his efforts; and that it might be lighter and consequently more easily managed. Rubenski leapt into it, and putting off without fear or embarrassment, his skill aided by good fortune soon brought him to the opposite bank.

He

He was absent more than an hour, and when he returned, his countenance declared to Phedora what she already but too well imagined: he seemed fearful of revealing the event of his expedition, lest her anxiety so violent in suspense, should still encrease with the certainty of the evil she had so much dreaded. She gazed upon him sometime in silence and he was not in haste to break it. At length Phedora exclaimed, "The Baroness is gone! I feared it would be so: but I must submit to my destiny."

Rubenski was both surprised and delighted with the calmness with which she spoke. "You have guessed right;" returned he, "the Boyard, the lady and their attendants left the village where they had taken up their residence, the day after she came to the river side to enquire for you. It would be impossible to overtake them as they travel on horseback, and I or any other peasant about here could only follow on foot. Return then to my family who will cherish and serve you:
and

and as you have supplied us with bread in our distress, I will labour in my turn to procure it for you, if you will share our fate."

Phedora thanked him for what he had already done to serve her, and equally for what he meant to do. "I have now no option," she replied, "and gratefully accept your offered protection: I ought indeed to think myself peculiarly happy that I have met with people so benevolent and good. I will try therefore to forget the accident that cast me amongst you, and evince my thankfulness by cheerful resignation."

She then bade adieu to the villagers, and journied towards the hut, which was now become her home.

CHAP. VI.

- " One gains by what another is bereft :
" The frugal destinies have only left
" A common bank of happiness below,
" Maintain'd like nature, by an ebb and flow."

THE women received her with compassion and kindness, and the children with caresses and satisfaction: Phedora sighed, but welcomed every mark of commiseration with complacency. When her fate was decided, and the combat between hope and fear was no more, her mind resumed its usual gentle and placid tone, and every inhabitant of the hut became charmed with her soft humility, and the sweetness of her disposition. Again she offered her rubles to the acceptance of Rubenski;

Rubenski; but though urged by her, he would only take half of them: the whole amounted but to ten; and with his five, the son of Matheowna was to buy or build a hut, and furnish it; an undertaking which to him appeared by no means impossible.

He immediately sought for a little habitation in the village where the fellow-travellers of his fair name-sake had resided, and learnt that the very cottage at which the Baroness had lodged was becoming vacant; for the people enriched by her bounty, were removing to a more opulent place. Rubenski bargained with them to succeed to the possession of it, for the sum of two rubles, besides which he was to pay a small yearly consideration to the Lord of the domain: for another ruble he bought likewise all the magnificent furniture it contained, because the people could not carry it off conveniently: it consisted of a stove and two or three pine-tree stools, and such was the good fortune of Rubenski, that
a few

a few platters and wooden spoons were thrown into the bargain.

In about a week, himself, his venerable mother, Ottokesa and her children entered their new dwelling, which Phedora surveyed with emotion, as having sheltered her beloved friend Madame Hartsen: no vestige of her now remained within those walls she had so much honoured; but Phedora had visited the former owners of this distinguished little mansion before they had quitted it, and questioned them earnestly and with minuteness concerning their noble guest. She learnt that the Lady was brought to their hut in a state of grief bordering on despair: that she would not suffer her attendants to be for a moment absent from the river-side, which they repeatedly rode up and down, as did the Boyard, who seemed likewise excessively sorrowful; and sometimes she would accompany them, always returning more concerned: and one day after the flood had abated, the servants saw the dead horse lying upon a meadow

meadow which had been overflowed, about three versts below the village. They told the Boyard of this, and he went to examine if the body of the rider were not somewhere near: but it could no where be found, and then the Lady grieved more than ever; and two or three days after, she suddenly determined to pursue her journey.

Phedora felt a melancholy satisfaction in being thus tenderly mourned; yet she ardently longed to end the concern of the amiable Baroness, whose sensations were, she knew, extremely acute, and might injure her health, as they would be heightened by a sentiment of remorse for the share she had, though an involuntary one, in causing the disaster.

For the present however, Phedora endeavoured to drive from her mind every idea that tended to encrease her own regrets; and as the summer now rapidly approached, to divert her imagination, she often accompanied

nied the children of Ottokesa into a wood that sheltered a slope to the north of the village: here she sometimes met Rubenski, the nature of whose general employment, she was yet ignorant of: she now discovered however, that he gathered medical roots* and simples; and that when he had collected a sufficient quantity for the purpose of sale, he usually carried them to a small town a few versts to the south; but when the market was overstocked there, he was compelled to carry them further. Rubenski generally gained enough by this little traffick to furnish his family with a frugal meal all the year round: in winter he employed himself in catching animals, whose skins he himself cured for cloathing, and his property had been very considerable for the place he lived in, before the incident which had deprived him of the produce of many years of toil and ingenious industry. His cottage had been situated near that which had first sheltered Phedora, and neighbourhood, more than any similarity of disposition

* Rhubarb is a native of Russia.

disposition, had produced a sort of friendship between the families.

Phedora now diligently accompanied Rubenski in his daily rambles, for the avowed purpose of assisting him in collecting his roots and simples: she soon learnt to distinguish them, and by degrees, found out the soil in which they were most disposed to flourish. In a short time her dexterity and knowledge equalled that of her instructor, and this employment whilst it amused her mind, gratified her inclination to become serviceable to her humble friends.

Matheowna grew each day more attached to her beautiful inmate; she still gazed upon her fine countenance with the most tender interest, and never failed during the examination to sigh out the name of Czerłkowi. Otłokęsa too, cherished her as a daughter; and had not the remembrance of the past struck upon her heart with fond regret, she

might have been contented in the cottage of Rubenski.

As the summer advanced, Phedora began to think of her intended journey : yet upon reflection, she hesitated which way to bend her steps. She knew that Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine would have no inducement to remain at Moscow if Ivan should be ordered from thence, and the Baron, she well remembered, had affirmed that he would not long continue there.

Her terror of Matheowitz, and the Cossack Zappavo, who might perchance encounter her, operated likewise to deter her from endeavouring to reach Moscow ; and with almost equal doubt and uncertainty, she resolved to travel into Luthuania, in the hope feeble as it was, of meeting either the Countess Rectzizi or Madame Hartfen at Grodno. Should she be disappointed in this object, she had then no other prospect but of entering into the service of some Polish family ; y

any destiny she thought preferable to the misery of living in a perpetual estrangement from all she loved and revered, without a probability of beholding them more, attended with the melancholy circumstance of being considered as one consigned to the oblivious grave. She had experienced however enough of danger, to make her shudder at the idea of traversing a country over-run by the troops of opposing powers; neither could she hastily resolve to wound the tender affection her generous hosts had conceived for her, by deserting their roof without bidding them farewell: at the same time she was sensible her plan was too hazardous, and replete with evils that might very reasonably be expected to result from it, to obtain their consent and approbation.

At length the time drew near, in which Rubenski carried his little merchandise to the neighbouring town; and Phedora formed a number of pretexts for accompanying him, without exciting in his mother and Ottokesa

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a suspicion

a suspicion that she meant not to return to them. Four of her rubles still remained entire: for neither Rubenski nor his family would receive from her a copeck more than their occasions compelled them to accept: one of these she purposed to leave with the good old Matheowna, and with the other three she intended to prosecute her journey. She now very well understood the absolute necessity there was for every traveller to be furnished with money to supply their exigencies; since the general benevolence of mankind is not sufficiently extensive, to relieve the wants of the stranger cast upon their charity. In Mr. Leuhaupt's village it had been different: converts to the lessons he himself practised, and won by his example, that careless indifference to the miseries of others ceased to be habitual, when the peasants were convinced that their pastor felt all the delight he had painted to them, in the accomplishment of a beneficent action. Phedora was become acquainted by experience that the world was chequered with

good and evil, though her own destiny in meeting with many and excellent friends, prevented her from guessing how much the latter preponderated.

The profound ignorance in which the children of Ottokesa had been brought up, furnished Phedora with a pretence for wishing to go with their father to the town he frequented, where she hoped to be able to obtain a Polish book of some kind, to teach them to read: an accomplishment which but for Mr. Leuhaupt, she would not herself most probably have been mistress of; since the widow Rubenski had not the means of purchasing any books to instruct her grandchild, neither did she think it prudent to draw upon herself the envy and indignation of her neighbours, by permitting them to discover that she was better informed than themselves. Phedora was much surprised to find that Matheowna was far from being so unlettered as the Russian peasantry usually were, and on expressing it to her, she learnt from the lips of

the good old woman, that she was a Luthuanian, and had received many advantages in her youth from the family of a noble Pole, which had since suffered a cruel reverse of fortune; and from that time, she had been obliged to rely for her support, upon the affection of her son Rubenski, who had immediately before she came to live with him, married Ottokefa, then a pretty young Rus.

Phedora was much delighted that Matheowna was capable of supplying her absence to the children, who would not by these means be robbed of the pleasure she had promised them, of becoming as learned as herself. They had seen her reading a small book which happened to be in her pocket when she was separated from Madame Hartfen, and were very anxious to discover what this meant, as they had never beheld any one so employed: their curiosity inspired her with a wish to instruct them; but as her book was in the Russian language and Matheowna could only read the Polish, she reflected that when she

let

left them, it could be of no further use, and that if she began her instructions in one language, and Matheowna continued them, less ably perhaps, in another, her grand-children would not most probably profit much by the effort. She therefore wholly deferred the undertaking until the Polish book was procured; and when she had purchased it, if no unfavourable circumstance intervened to retard her long projected journey, she meant to delegate the task wholly to Matheowna; and upon reaching the town already mentioned, proposed to herself to send back by their father, a few tokens of her friendship for the children of Ottokesa, and pursue her way to Grodno.

Phedora made known her intention of accompanying Rubenski, the day before he began his journey; and though his mother guessed not the entire desertion she meditated, she discovered great reluctance to part with her: but when she found her young friend obstinately bent upon the plan, she

M 4

yielded

yielded as well as Ottokesa to her wish, and the morning so eagerly expected by Phedora, at length rose upon the cottage she was about to quit: she embraced the two women with tender affection, and caressed her little playmates as fondly, giving to the care of the elder, a ruble to be presented to her grandmother, after Rubenski and herself had departed. The venerable Matheowna wept as her son and Phedora left the dwelling, whilst his children and his wife could not be prevented from attending him two or three versts.

And now again they repeated their farewell, and returned more pensively to their home: Phedora stooped to gaze upon the little groupe as they walked away, and Rubenski followed her example. When they were no longer in sight, he checked a sigh; "It is always thus with us," exclaimed he, "though we know that we shall meet again in a few days at furthest. But Ottokesa," he added, "is not like other Rus women; she is
neither

neither idle nor drunken, she takes care of our children, and loves my poor mother as much as if she was her own."

Phedora readily joined in this commendation, which she extended to the good old Matheowna: Rubenski was delighted with the theme, and it lasted until they arrived at a considerable village, where he halted to relieve the weariness of his young companion.

In about an hour they again renewed their journey, and were now sheltered from the noon-day sun, by a pleasant wood which skirted the road for many versts. Phedora eagerly enquired if this were the way to Minski in Luthuania, which she had heard the Baroness say she should pass in her progress to Novogrodek. Rubenski replied, that the road to Minski was rather more to the east, and led to the town of Skow on the banks of the Nieper.

M 5

" And

"And how far," asked Phedora, "shall we be from Skow when you reach the end of your journey?"

Rubenski hesitated to consider, and at length affirmed that it must be at least fifty versts. She then enquired if he had ever travelled so far to sell his little stock.

"Once," replied he; "but it is four days journey from our cottage, loaded as I am; and my family were uneasy at my long stay."

"And should you now," said Phedora, "be unable to dispose of your fimples at the place we are going to, would you proceed to Skow?"

"I should be compelled to it," returned Rubenski, "for there is but one little town nearer, where I certainly could not be more successful: but I would leave you by the way to rest until I came back, for you would not be able to walk so many versts under this sun."

"No

"No, I would accompany you," cried she eagerly; I wish to go to that town, for there perhaps I might learn some tidings of my Polish friends."

Rubenski now began to suspect the motive that had operated to make her so earnest to travel with him: he did not reply to the intimation she had given, for he supposed that she would not be contented with visiting Skow, but would wish, as she once remotely hinted, to pursue her enquiries by proceeding alone to Minski: and as he regarded her with almost as much affection as he felt for either of his children, he was pained at the idea of her quitting him to prosecute a plan so dangerous, which he determined to oppose very resolutely. He recollected too, the uneasiness his wife and mother would suffer if he returned without her, and resolved to sell his little merchandise at a disadvantage, at the first place he reached, rather than hazard the reproaches they would make him for not taking better care of his charge.

It was sometime after sun-set, when they arrived on the second day at the town which was the usual boundary of Rubenski's journey. Here they reposed; and in the morning he had already transacted above half his business, before Phedora awaked from the deep sleep into which the fatigue of the preceding days had cast her. When she arose, she learnt from him his diligence and success. "Tomorrow," said he, "we will travel back to our village, and surprise Ottokesa and my mother with our hasty return,"

Phedora then, after a little hesitation, confessed her resolution of going on to Minski, and from thence to Grodno, and Rubenski alarmed at her decisive answer, warmly argued with her upon the wildness of the undertaking.

"My own fears," replied she, "have already pointed out to me the dangers I must encounter; but I cannot resist the earnest wish of my heart to seek those revered friends from whom I have been severed so strangely.

Urge

Urge me not good Rubenski, to give up my plan: nothing but compulsion shall effect it; and you have not the right—still less I am persuaded have you the inclination, to enforce your advice by any other than gentle means.”

He was embarrassed, and wished for the presence of his wife and mother to reason with Phedora, whose determined perseverance he knew not how to resist, yet was very unwilling to accede to: he employed however, every dissuasive his affection for her suggested; and at length as a last resource, urged her to return once more to his cottage, from whence if she still chose to quit it, he would attend her himself as far as Grodno.

Phedora thanked him for this instance of friendship, but declined the proposition, from the dread of witnessing the distress of the good old Matheowna, and being compelled to listen to the ardent entreaties of Ottokesa and her children, without complying with them:
she

she was besides extremely unwilling to allow Rubenski to consume the fruits of his industry in so long a journey, when perhaps upon accomplishing it, by not meeting with her friends, she might be unable to reward his zealous attachment, or even repay him the money he must expend by the way. She hinted to him these reasons, that she might not appear too obstinately bent on drawing difficulties upon her head; and though he could not successfully oppose them, he was far from being satisfied with their efficiency. He resolved, though with a heavy heart, to accompany her to Skow, where he hoped to meet with an opportunity of consigning her to the care of some mechanick or peasant travelling to Minski.

Phedora was much pleased with the sort of triumph she had obtained over his remonstrances; yet she was grateful for the affection which had produced them, and felt an encrease of esteem for the honest and well-meaning Rubenski, who sat off with his fair companion,

companion for the town of Skow, taking with him the remainder of his merchandise, which he thought he could dispose of to rather more advantage there.

They travelled without any incident for the first day, but on the next, they met a small party of Swedes, who seemed by their haste, to be retreating before a successful enemy. Rubenski, on the first glance he took of them, hastened to avoid their notice by striking into a forest not far from the road, where they were compelled to linger above two hours, that they might not fall into the power of wretches, who in retreating from a conquered country, care not what outrages they commit. Rubenski expatiated with redoubled energy, whilst he was under the influence of this alarm, upon the horrors Phedora must be subject not only to behold, but to become the victim of, if she would not renounce her design, and suffer him to conduct her back to his hut.

“ Ah

“ Ah my friend,” cried she, in answer to his arguments,” when the mingled voice of gratitude, affection, reverence and esteem urge me forward, it is not the single sensation of fear, defenceless though I am, which can restrain my steps.”

He was displeased at her obstinacy of resolution; yet as his anger arose from regard, it was neither cold nor severe: she saw and endeavoured to dispel it; but they arrived at the inn where they reposed during the short summer night, before she had accomplished the reduction of his ill-humour.

By day break the next morning they were again upon the road, for Phedora would not spare herself, that the length of Rubenski's absence might not alarm his family, and in the evening of the next day arrived at Skow, having only rested during the mid-day heat, which now began to be almost wholly insupportable even to the hardy peasant.

Rubenski

Rubenski hastened to dispose of the remainder of his little stock; and had the good fortune to sell it for more money than he had hitherto obtained at any one time: indeed the assistance of Phedora had, by encreasing the quantity, also encreased his profits. When his traffic was over, he proffered to her half his money, and was highly offended that she refused to accept it.

“Without your aid,” cried he, “I should not now have a family to cater for: we must have perished with hunger. You offered me all you possessed: I tender to your acceptance the half only of what I have—the other half my wife, my mother, my children claim from me. Take then what is doubly your own—it is your’s by restitution, and you likewise laboured for it—the whole is your’s: what I retain I still receive from your bounty.”

Phedora urged by these arguments, uttered with an air of chagrin and vexation, knew
not

not how to deny the assent he seemed bent upon obtaining: she could not however, overcome her reluctance to diminish so considerably his little treasure, and after much friendly altercation, she consented to accept a fourth part of it. When this point was adjusted, Rubenski busied himself in seeking out some persons travelling to Minski, with whom he could confide Phedora.

Their host at Skow was the owner of a small barge which he navigated as far as Mogiloff on the Nieper, carrying both passengers and goods: and from him Rubenski learnt, that in a day or two he should convey a peasant and his wife to Mogiloff, who would from thence travel to Boruffon, where there were people often going to Minski, he said, and the young woman, could easily meet with companions. Phedora listened to this arrangement with pleasure, and eagerly desired to see the man and woman who were to become her protectors. Her host introduced her to them the next day, and they readily
consented

consented to admit her into their society and fellowship, as far as the town they were going to, provided she could afford to pay her share of their moderate expences by the way.

To remove any suspicion of her inability to comply with this precautionary demand, Phedora deposited in their hands two rubles, equal in value to the Polish rix dollars. The peasants looked at the coin with surprise and pleasure; but honestly averred that one would be sufficient to defray her expences from Mogiloff to Boruffon; from whence at the request of Rubenski, they promised to get her conveyed in safety to Minski. Phedora thus satisfactorily accommodated, entreated him to hasten back to his family, who would otherwise be surprised and alarmed at his unusual length of absence: he assented to this plea, and having placed Phedora in the same house with the peasant and his wife, he bade her a reluctant adieu, and quitted Skow, ruminating on his way home upon the reception he was likely to meet with from his
mother

mother and Ottokefa, for having suffered his young companion to stay behind amidst strangers, and subject to dangers and distresses his friendship for her even magnified.

The next morning by sun-rise, Phedora and her new protectors were seated in the passage-*barge*, and gliding gently down the Nieper, whose banks on the eastern side rose in a gradual ascent and were crowned with the mountains of Meislaw at some distance: the western side exhibited a beautiful and fertile plain, interspersed with light groves of pine, and shaded towards the horizon by the immense forests of Minski. The *barge-master* and the peasants, who had often been up and down the stream without observing either scene, had their eyes intently fixed upon some packages of flax, and lumps of bees-wax, the value of which they were each estimating, with a warm preference to the decision of their own judgment. Phedora listened for some time to their conversation, endeavouring with her usual good humour to take an interest

interest and a part in it; but insensibly her attention wandered, and her eyes glanced over the prospects around her. To the fine arts she was an utter stranger, though by the beauties of nature, her eye and her imagination were equally captivated.

She gazed first upon the mountains with an emotion of wonder, and having regarded for a few minutes the fantastic forms of some, and the even regular ascent of others, she turned herself with a more pleasing sensation, to the beautiful verdure of the plain, and the sheltering groves which here and there waved with a varying and chequered shade over its green carpet. In one spot her busy fancy hastily erected a little mansion for the amiable Baroness, where it grouped the set of beings her heart most loved: in another she as quickly raised a commodious cottage for Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine, herself their favoured, their admiring guest. She had placed it on the skirt of a wood, and its inclosure was watered by a murmuring rivulet

let that trickled with wanton course over the mead and fell into the Nieper.

From reveries so pleasing, she was awakened by a rough voice, calling upon her to share a homely meal, spread with slovenly haste over a dirty piece of sail-cloth. Phedora had not taken any refreshment since the preceding evening; and notwithstanding the neatness of those imaginary repasts in Mr. Leuhaupt's airy cottage, where his friendly and instructive voice presided over the board, and it was decked with delicate cleanliness; notwithstanding the disgusting opposition to this picture the real food before her presented, she shared it with her companions, temperately indeed, but not without relish.— So happily are we all endued with a capacity to bend beneath the subduing power of existing circumstances.

At mid-day the scorching sun made her look towards the groves with double pleasure: the peasants were sleeping soundly, with
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its bright beams playing unfelt upon their humid faces, and the barge-master overcome with the same drowsy inclination, committed the conduct of his boat to his son, a young lad: and he too, unable to resist a power which had thus conquered three people so much his seniors, suffered the murmuring of the stream to lull him every five minutes into a forgetfulness, which the importance of the charge that had devolved upon him (so his father would have said) should have enabled him to set at defiance.

Phedora gazed upon the poor boy with compassion, and could not help admiring the evident machinery of the human mind, which is not able to shake off the anxious sensation that oppresses it, even in a state of apparent insensibility: the lad started up now and then, to observe if his lapse of attention had been discovered, and having trimmed the rudder and shook himself, sunk again into a short but leaden slumber. Phedora smiled at his self-indulgence, so hardly earned; and the boy noticed

noticed her watchfulness, but his natural perception enabled him to distinguish in her countenance, a sweetness that would not permit her to betray him.

At length the whole party threw off their sleepy fetters as if by mutual consent, to enjoy another meal; and again when it was over, argued upon the value of the property they were carrying to sale. Towards evening Phedora respired a cooler air, and looked round her with increased delight; every sound then seemed more gently to strike her ear, and every object softened to her view: the twilight spread with stealing influence over the whole prospect, and again the most pleasing reveries occupied her mind. They were too soothing not to be welcomed, and so completely did they engross her, that after some minutes of silence, the voice of the barge-master, calling in an angry tone to his son, startled her even to a degree of terror. In the night she followed the example of the peasants, and slept till sun-rise, waking however

ever time enough to see it bursting from behind the mountains of Meislaw, and tinging the Neiper with its first ruddy beams.

She still admired the landscape around her, but it no longer engaged her whole attention, and she drew from her pocket her Russ book, which recalled to her imagination the children of Rubenski and Ottokesa: her first care at Skow had been to make the purchase which was the ostensible reason of her journey, and with some difficulty she had procured for her little play-fellows, two books in the Polish language, which she sent to the venerable Matheowna by her son.

On the evening of the second day she would have been well pleased to have stretched her limbs, by walking a verst or two in a Russ road, exactly marked out on each side by a close row of firs, to the entire exclusion of all prospect; so much was she wearied with the total inactivity in which she had so long remained. The following morning

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however brought them to the town of Mogiloff or Mohilow: but Phedora had not an opportunity of viewing it except at a small distance, for her companions proceeded immediately on their journey loaded with their merchandize: and as she only carried with her a few necessaries she had bought at Skow, she offered to relieve them of a small share of their burthen: but this the peasants absolutely refused, because they imagined she would expect some compensation for her trouble.

They travelled all the night, resting only at intervals for a short time, at some little wooden huts by the road-side. About two hours after sun-rise, they arrived at an inconsiderable branch of the Niéper; and the companions of Phedora were surprised at missing a bridge they had been used to cross in their former expeditions. Upon enquiry they learnt that some troops of Swedes had cut it away a fortnight before.

The poor peasants turned pale at this intelligence, which threatened much danger to themselves and their property, if as they now dreaded, they should meet either a Russian or Swedish party in the vast forest they were compelled to traverse a part of to reach Boruffon. Phedora amply partook of their uneasiness: all the arguments and remonstrances Rubenski had used, now recurred to her with the impressive force which truth always gives; but it was too late to profit by them.

When the first alarm was past however, her natural courage surmounted her fears, and she communicated a portion of it to her companions. They were ferried over the river, and advanced towards a forest that lay within a verst of it, which they reached before the noon-day heat obliged them to relax their pace; and having walked about two hours under the shade of the gloomy fir, intermixed here and there with a few beech-trees, they sat down at the foot of one of them a little

way out of the path, to eat their meal. The peasants looked round them with caution before they laid down their burthens, and whilst they devoured their food with trepidation and haste, started at every sound, and instinctively caught hold of their little treasure, ready to fly at the approach of danger. Phedora infected with their terrors, hastily turned her eyes which ever way their regards pointed, and almost fancied the rustling of the foliage was the martial step of the ambushed soldier. When the repast which their fears had so much embittered, was over, they jumped up with alacrity, without indulging in longer repose, and pushed forward.

As the sun declined, the gloom of the forest encreased, and the alarms of the peasants became so powerful as to impede their progress: the woman trembled and tottered under her burthen, but would not yet suffer Phedora to assist her, because she imagined her property to be more safe in her own immediate care.

At

At length the sun wholly withdrew from the hemisphere, and left them in increasing dread; for the man confused by his fears, was doubtful if he had taken the right path, and notwithstanding the urgent expostulation of his wife, would not proceed until the day broke upon them, lest he should lose himself, and die with hunger and fatigue before he could recover the road to the next village.

Phedora shuddered at the idea of passing so many hours in this dreary spot, and joined her entreaty to the remonstrances of the woman, that he would continue at a venture: but each was alike vain; for the peasant was obstinate, and they were compelled to submit to his determination. They then sat down close to each other, counting the moments as they flew, listening to every breeze which the stillness of the night bore to their ears, and invoking with earnest wishes the coming of day.

Five long hours, which appeared to this little groupe the lapse of so many ages, passed heavily 'ere the morning twilight stole upon them; the peasant then eagerly starting up to look round for some known object or sign to guide his doubtful steps, informed his female companions, after a few minutes of observation, that they must return about half a verst, and then take a path that branched out more to the north: his wife in a low and almost unintelligible voice, grumbled her displeasure at the mistake he had made, which was rather unreasonable, because though she had often travelled with him the same road, she depended solely upon his attention to arrive safely at the end of her journey. Phedora on the contrary, acknowledged very readily that he had been right, in not acceding to the entreaties which their terrors had so blindly urged; and was thankful that he had so prudently judged.

They quickly regained the path mentioned by the peasant, and after walking in it above
four

four vèrsts, sat down to break their fast. They had suffered so much on the preceding night from the aggravated horrors of darkness and anxiety lest they should not be able to find their way, that half their fears seemed now to be dispelled : but Phedora was much startled on learning that the forest was tenanted by bears and wolves, who when pressed by hunger, assailed the helpless traveller with a too fatal and irresistible fury. This intelligence chilled her blood, and she could no longer do honour to the provisions before her.

When the man and his wife had satisfied their hunger, he gathered up the fragments of the repast, and was taking his burthen upon his back with considerable alacrity, when a piercing scream from the woman suddenly drew his attention towards her : already however she had darted away, as swiftly as the weight she carried would permit her, and he followed her example without looking for the cause of this alarm.

Phedora, whose imagination was now filled with the stories she had just listened to, of numerous péasants devoured by the savage inhabitants of the forest, fled still more rapidly than her companions, and ceased not her course until her breath and limbs equally failed her. She then looked round in terror and amazement, and recollected with bitter regret, that it would be almost impossible to find again her fellow-travellers. This idea disturbed her even more than the first subject of alarm, and in the agony that seized her, she called vehemently to the peasants, from whom she had thus incautiously separated herself: but no sound returned upon the breeze in answer to her cries, and she ran too and fro shrieking for help, in all the distraction of the wildest despair.

At length a rustling in the branches of a tree immediately above her, caught her attention, and she perceived through the foliage, a pair of wild, keen, black eyes looking earnestly at her: they seemed to indicate at
once

once mischief, curiosity, surprise, fear and pleasure. Phedora had now no longer the power of motion: struck with an universal tremor, she returned with an involuntary gaze the fixed attention of those basilisk eyes. The rest of the countenance was covered with long tangled hair, which gave a supernatural appearance to the brilliant orbs, whose quick glances shot from amidst the disordered tresses.

Phedora with a strong effort, broke from the enchantment that seemed to bind her; and already flying with swiftness, a discordant long melancholy scream added wings to her feet. She run she knew not where, and having lost her path, returned inadvertently to the place she had been so eager to quit: again she darted away in breathless haste, till at length unable to proceed, she threw herself into the hollow of a tree, for present shelter from the strange being who had thus terrified her.

In this asylum, which could only partially screen her from observation, she remained some hours, without gaining courage to venture from it three paces, so much had her imagination been disordered by the vision by which it was still occupied. She looked up every five minutes amidst the branches that hung over her head, expecting to behold the eyes again gazing at her : but nothing moved round her retreat, except the agitated leaves that whistled in a light cadence to the breeze that fanned them. At length she ventured forth with a stealing step and a mien of cautious observation ; and had now leisure to reflect upon her imprudence in not attending to the motions of the peasants, her regretted companions. She looked in vain for a path, nor did the place she was in ever seem to have been visited by a human being besides herself. The most horrible images assailed her mind, and urged her to fly, though she knew not which way to turn, and might only penetrate still deeper perhaps, in the unexplored parts of the forest. Hastily she walk-

ed forward, endeavouring to find an opening in the wood, that she might at least view the heavens, which were then entirely excluded from her sight by the immense and intermingled arms of trees, appearing by their bulk and height to be almost coeval with the earth they covered. But the more she advanced, the more gloomy and dark the way became, and her heart fluttered with terror and despondency.

She severely reproached herself with having disregarded the advice and entreaty of the good Rubenski, who had so well foreseen the dangers she must encounter. "This one however," exclaimed Phedora aloud, "escaped his imagination! ah little does he at this moment, think of the situation into which my adventurous folly has precipitated me! I have wounded the tender affection Matheowna and her family had conceived for me, and how justly am I punished—I shall never more behold those dear friends for whom I slighted their honest love. Ca-

therine, Ulmeri, Rectzizi, I now indeed must bid you all adieu!"

These last words were accompanied by tears: she sighed mournfully, but though utterly hopeless still walked on with a faltering gait, and stumbling almost every minute over the roots of trees that crossed the ground in every direction, and often rose considerably above its surface. Her weariness was now too potent to be resisted, and she sunk down recommending herself to heaven: but as the evening was closing in, she wished to secure a place of refuge for the night; and making an effort to rally her spirits and her strength, she rose from the earth on recollecting that she had seen as she had passed along, many trees hollowed by age, like the one into which she had thrown herself, in her terror at the strange vision she now almost doubted the reality of, until the remembrance of the scream that still rung in her ears confirmed it beyond dispute.

Gazing

Gazing round her with attention, she at length discovered an immense beech, the bark of which alone conveyed nurture to the capacious branches above: from a small aperture near the root she observed this circumstance, and having with difficulty crept through it, found her new habitation capable of containing the whole family of Rubenski, had they been there to share it with her.

The bottom of it was filled with withered branches and dried leaves: with the first she barricadoed the entrance, and with the second formed a bed to repose her wearied limbs, and supperless though she was, soon fell into a deep sleep when her little arrangement was ended, having first earnestly prayed for the protection of the Almighty.

CHAP. VII.

“ A commoner of nature ;
“ Living in a shady forests' sylvan scene,
“ Stretch'd at my length within some aged oak :
“ My uncomb'd locks, matted like mistletoe,
“ Hang o'er my face ; the herd come jumping by me,
“ And, fearless, quench their thirst while I look on,
“ And take me for their fellow-citizen.” —

WHEN the light of approaching day broke in upon her from her roofless apartment, she started up in some agitation on hearing a rustling, as if some creature were moving very near her, and looking for this dreaded object, saw within a few feet of her, nestled amidst the dead leaves, a diminutive human countenance with the eye-lids closed in sleep: long chestnut-coloured tresses hung in great disorder over a small but very muscular arm, stretched out to its full extent, and the

the ends of the fingers exhibited a most frightful length of nails.

Phedora was much surprised, and longed, yet feared to wake this unlooked-for companion: whilst she stood irresolute, the figure moved, and casting off its drowsiness, opened those bright and piercing eyes which had so much alarmed her the preceding day: the same expression animated them when they turned upon her, and a hoarse discordant noise issued from a pair of lips, which for form and colour might have vied with her own. This strange being rose up, and shook from its hair the leaves that hung about it: Phedora with an astonishment that kept her motionless, then beheld a handsome boy,* apparently of seven or eight years of age, but with an aspect so wild, and motions so uncouth,

* In the forest of Minski have been found several wild boys, supposed to be left there by the mothers in a hasty flight from marauding Tartars, who sometimes penetrate into Poland, and carry off whole villages into slavery.—*Universal Traveller*.

uncouth, that she stood upon her guard lest he should in sport bury his long nails in her face, In the softest tone she could assume, she spoke to him: he listened eagerly with seeming pleasure, but made no answer, still remaining however in an attitude of expectation, as if he wished her to continue talking. She resumed her questions, and advanced towards the child with a smile that was meant to hide the trepidation which the mischievous turn of his black eye still occasioned her to feel. He smiled likewise, and striking his hands together, shouted with such violence that the woods rung with the sound: this vehemence startled Phedora, who stopt short, and again he stood still, in a listening attitude.

She imagined that the tone of her voice pleased him; already she had spoken both in the Polish and Russ languages, and he seemed not to comprehend either, but as he expected her to proceed, she interrogated him once more. "Whence came you?" she

she enquired; "who left you, young as you are, in this desolate place, to the protection of heaven indeed, but deprived of the assistance of your fellow-creatures, and with only nature for your guide? poor child! you smile, but you have no language to answer me with." The tears came into her eyes whilst she held out her hand to the boy with gentle compassion. He rudely seized it, and one of his nails dividing the skin, Phedora shrunk from him; but he held her with a powerful grasp, and applied his lips to the wound to suck the blood that dropt from it: his eyes had then a savage delight in them which struck her with terror. His strength was far superior to his years, and though she struggled violently, she could not free her hand, already much swelled with the wild greediness with which he drew the blood into his mouth. No persuasion or entreaty could avail her, for he understood not her words, yet as a last resource she tried the effect of her voice, which had seemed to have over him a power so wonderful, and began singing
a little

a little Polish air which Ulmeri had taught her. The boy raised his face, and instantly let fall her hand, which she hid from him, whilst she continued her song with a smiling countenance.

When it was ended, he shouted as he had done before, and she now discovered that this was an effort of imitation. The strangeness of this adventure had hitherto prevented her from attending to the calls of hunger, which she now found could not much longer be repelled: she knew not if the meals of her new acquaintance were such as she could partake of, but she endeavoured to make him understand by every sign she could invent, that she wanted food; and he appeared much entertained by her motions, which he gazed at with a laughing air, but paid no further attention to them.

Phedora resolved however, not to lose sight of him, imagining very justly that he would soon go in search of sustenance: she therefore
turned

turned to the aperture at which she had entered, to take away the dry wood and rubbish she had heaped against it, that she might be ready to follow him out; and as she found the opening exactly blocked up as she had left it, she concluded that her young companion had entered from above, and slipped down the inside of the rugged bark, from the branches that grew round the upper part of it.

This conjecture was entirely right, for by the time she had crept to the outside of her sylvan habitation, he was already perched above, watching her with a wild but sportive air of mischief. She beckoned to him to descend, but he paid no regard to the action, not appearing indeed to understand it, and began leaping from branch to branch with the activity of a monkey, still keeping his eyes fixed upon her.

Phedora could not behold the ease and celerity of his various motions without being
amused,

amused, in spite of the hunger that preyed upon her : she observed that he used his hands equally with his feet, and though his limbs were slender they were remarkably strong. At length tired of this exercise, he ceased for a moment, and running down the tree with the swiftness of lightening, flew off so suddenly, that she could scarcely see which way he bent his course : she was herself a swift runner, and followed him with all the speed she could make. The boy then looked back, and seemed pleased with the chase, but by far out-stripped his fair pursurer, by galloping both upon his hands and feet : he sometimes stopt when he was nearly out of sight, apparently to give her a chance of overtaking him, but when she approached, he again darted off and left her far behind.

The spirits and strength of Phedora now forsook her ; she began to despair of inducing the young savage to supply her with any share of the food he catered for himself, and in the anguish of her disappointment, reproached

proached him with his frolicksome cruelty as though he had understood her complaints. Almost famished, she examined every tree as high as she could reach, for wild honey, and would have climbed those where she imagined she was most likely to be successful, but her strength was not equal to the effort, and she was obliged to desist.

As she stood at the foot of an ancient fir, gazing wistfully up, the boy sprung suddenly by her, and mounting amidst the branches, found what she was so earnestly wishing for: she held up her hands, inviting him to throw down a piece of honey-comb; but he eat voraciously, without attending to her supplicating gestures; and as her only resource, Phedora now thought of turning up the earth in search of roots.

Her insensible companion had led her to a more open part of the forest, and after much labour and many difficulties in the pursuit, she had the good fortune to find it at length
not

not unsuccessful: yet she hesitated to eat what she had dug up, lest it should be of a poisonous quality; but the boy relieved her fears in some degree, by snatching from her a part of her newly obtained possessions, and devouring it: she supposed therefore that he must be well acquainted with the nature of the vegetable, from his fearless manner of eating it; and impelled by hunger, though not without some reluctance, she swallowed all that her unceremonious little friend had left of her prize: it was pleasant to the taste, and Phedora eagerly sought for more of the root, though she was obliged to be very watchful to prevent the active cupidity of the child, who was in the space of a minute frisking upon the top of a tall tree, and bounding by her side.

At length when he thought her too busily employed to observe him, he brought down a large piece of honey-comb, and hid it with so much art, that Phedora could not have discovered it, had she not seen the process;
when

when he had quitted the place, and had retired to some distance, she run to it, and seized the concealed treasure, a part of which she eat with all the impatience of hunger. The boy looked excessively displeased, and his gambols ceased, whilst he regarded with an eye of indignation the motions of the fair purloiner, who not wishing to irritate him unnecessarily, offered to him the remnant of the feast, which he carried to the highest branches of the next tree; and in a few minutes his countenance again became all hilarity and sprightliness. Phedora sung her Polish air, to make him entirely forget the anger he had conceived at this incident, and he listened with as much eagerness as when he had first heard it, not failing to attempt as before, his rude imitation. She then walked a little way from him, to observe if he would suffer her to quit him, but he instantly followed her, bounding every other minute to an astonishing height, apparently to express his satisfaction.

Pleased

Pleased with the companionship he seemed inclined to cultivate, she permitted him to lead her as his fancy directed, speaking to him often with gentleness and complacency: suddenly however he sprung from her, and Phedora turning round to follow him with her eyes, beheld him at intervals between the trees, running with a swiftness scarcely credible: she feared that some savage beast was near, from whose vicinity the boy had instinctively fled, and hastily followed in the direction he had taken: but he soon met her again, carrying in one hand a small animal he had caught, the other he still put to the ground and used as a foot; his poor little prey, which appeared to be a young hare, was quivering with a remnant of life; but he ended it without any symptom of reluctance or mercy, by grasping its throat, and then tearing off the skin, he eat the flesh without separating the bones.

Phedora turned from a sight so disgusting, and setting down at the foot of a tree, fell
into

into a deep reverie : it was in part occasioned by the strange and inconceivable situation of this abandoned child, and in part by her own : she was unwilling to leave him, if he would have permitted the separation, because he was not only a companion to her, wild and uncouth as he was, but even appeared to her apprehensive mind a kind of protection against the dangers of this gloomy spot : he seemed too, to have attached himself to her, and she fancied that his manner was already become more gentle ; but she supposed that her influence over him, could not yet induce him to leave the forest, which she was extremely eager to quit without the delay which would be necessary, in order to win the entire confidence of her little savage friend.

When he had ended his repast, he arose from the ground, and presented to Phedora a spectacle which she could not regard without horror : his countenance was smeared with blood, in which he had likewise steeped his tangled hair, and his hands were completely

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pleatly discoloured. She had observed a small rill not far from the place, and leading the way to it, invited him to approach with the most persuasive tones she could use: he suffered her to take his hands without resisting the motion, and taught by experience, she had the precaution to guard against his nails, whilst she made him stoop to the stream; but before he would suffer the ablution she meditated, he put his mouth to the water and drank very eagerly: he then submitted with a little contention, to have his face, his hands and his long tresses freed from the stains that gave him so terrific an appearance. She rewarded his docility with a Russ song, and thought his imitation much less discordant than it had originally been.

To familiarise him still more to her, she gently endavoured to arrange his hair in better order; but this she soon found to be a work of time, and an exercise both of her own patience and that of the boy, who resisted vehemently when he felt the least inconvenience

venience from her employment: she so far succeeded however, as to be able to braid part of his chestnut locks; and binding them fancifully round his head, confined the rest, so that they could no longer hang over his face. He was much pleased with the change, but shook his little head, and put his hands to his forehead and temples several times, to discover how it had been effected.

Phedora had now some hopes of being fortunate enough to tame him, to such a degree at least, as to make him follow her out of his own haunts: his countenance, when it was washed, and cleared of the profusion of hair that darkened it, was excessively engaging, especially whilst he listened with an earnest yet smiling air, to her voice; at other moments there appeared too much mischief blended with the natural archness of his eye, which notwithstanding the difference of colour, Phedora fancied to resemble that of the Baroness, when she was in her most teasing tempers: the form of his face too was

the same, and this resemblance, faint as it was, endeared the child to her as much as his abandoned state, which highly excited her compassion, left as he had been in infancy, either by design or accident, to herd with beasts, and deprived of the use of that reason which was still innate in his mind.

As the day advanced, Phedora became extremely anxious to know if he constantly took up his abode at night, in the tree where she had found him; or if he wandered as chance directed him, without any fixed asylum against the dangers which darkness inevitably brought on, in a place so wild, so dreary, and infested, as she had been informed by the peasants, by savages of prey. It was therefore a consideration of importance to her, because she could scarcely hope to find another retreat so secure; nor indeed was she certain that the boy would remain with her when the twilight came on: on the contrary she suspected that he would dart away as he had done in the morning when in search of food,

food, and leave her to provide for her own security as she could.

When the evening began to close in, her uneasiness encreased, and she endeavoured to trace her way back to her sylvan dwelling: her little companion, though he did not quit her, was far from assisting the effort; but frolicking in a thousand antic leaps and bounds by her side, mislaid her attention, and puzzled her recollection.

To make him understand what she sought, she walked round several large trees, as though she were looking for the entrance: he would then run nimbly up the bark, and jumping from branch to branch, make her wait until his gambols ceased before she could induce him to proceed any further. Her anxiety to secure his company, which in her opinion was much preferable to entire solitude, was so great, that in spite of his attempts to free himself, she at length held him fast by the arm: he then led the way, but

Phedora could not discern whither he went, from the encreasing gloom that darkened round her: after walking or rather running near an hour, the boy stopt, and successfully struggling to make her quit her grasp, she heard him rustling amidst the branches of a tree a few paces from her: the sound led her to the place, for she could no longer distinguish any object, and with some trouble she discovered the aperture at which she had entered the preceding evening. She crept through it with a sensation of pleasure at the comparative safety of this retreat, and having barred the entrance as before, she knelt down and prayed aloud. When her little companion heard her voice, he glided from above, where he had hitherto remained, and as she ended her supplications to the Deity, he joined his harsh unconscious tones to her's.

Phedora was sensibly affected with the ideas this incident gave rise to, and added another petition to those her heart had already framed,

framed, for the little unenlightened being who knew not himself how to address the great author of light and life.

Her reflections upon the state of this boy, whose actions and pursuits gave little indication of that boasted reason, the intuitive inhabitant of the mind of man, kept her for some time waking, and her own association in his strange fate naturally mixt with these: she was not without fears, that if in vainly endeavouring to gain the open plain, she should take him from his own haunts, and conduct him to the more dangerous ones of savage beasts, they might both perish in the attempt: yet if she made it not, she was sensible that she must remain in this solitary condition, and instead of humanising the child, be content to fall through necessity, into his degenerate habits.

The Baroness, Phedora thought, would be delighted with the employment of unfolding his faculties and enlarging his ideas, and

could she once introduce the poor child to her notice, she might then indeed reflect with pleasure, on having drawn him from his wild and irrational habits, to a life dignified by reason and enlightened by religion.

When morning dawned, he was the first to start from his leafy bed, and the sound of his motions awoke Phedora, who on opening her eyes, beheld him waiting her levée with some signs of impatience : she greeted him with kindness, and he smiled in return with an air that seemed to thank her. She then turned from the boy to expedite her morning orisons, and having ended them, endeavoured to lead him through the aperture she had entered at herself ; but he refused to follow, obstinately persisting in climbing the tree, and descending again by the branches on the outside of the bark.

Phedora watched this ceremony, and discovered that it proceeded from an instinctive apprehension of danger ; for that he looked cautiously

cautiously and carefully on every side, and listened to every breeze, ere he would venture from his station: but when once assured of safety, he appeared to throw aside all restraint, and gambolled as usual with antic bounds, as far as her eye could trace him. It seemed however that he never lost sight of his fair associate, since whenever she walked a few paces, he run towards her with great swiftness, and would not again quit her side, until he had received some fresh token of her friendship.

Impatient to essay her projected plan of leaving the forest, she proceeded in the same direction he had taken the morning before, in order to attain a more open spot, where grew the wild roots, of which she meant to secure a large quantity for her surer support: her little gay companion, as if he guessed her intention, then led the way, only deviating at intervals to climb some tree that happened to hit his fancy.

At length they reached the place Phedora sought, and she instantly applied herself to dig up some of the roots with her knife: he looked at the instrument very earnestly for some time; and then turned the earth by the aid of his long nails with so much dispatch, that the utmost efforts of her labour could not equal it. As suddenly however he quitted this employment, and flew up a tree in search of honey, a food he seemed most to prefer.

She was afraid of following his example; for though in her childhood she had been very expert at climbing the firs that clustered round her native village, she was become timorous by disuse, and the enormous height of the forest trees made her shudder even for the safety of the boy, who sometimes terrified her with hanging by his little hands to the topmost branches, and suffering the wind to wave him to and fro.

Phedora

Phedora having at length procured as many roots as she could conveniently carry, found herself irresistably impelled to attempt regaining the society of her fellow-creatures, and leaving this desolate spot without permitting another day to pass over her head. She allured her little companion forward, but without knowing whither the way would lead, and imagined by the reluctance he discovered, that she was drawing him from his usual haunts: he hung back, yet appeared unwilling to leave her, and after walking for some time, stopt every other minute to look round him and listen, with marks of trepidation. She then smiled upon him, and her voice encouraged him to proceed, whilst she held his hand to prevent him from retreating suddenly from her; till his efforts either to advance too quickly, or to recede in terror, fatigued her arm so as to compel her to loosen him, and it then required all the persuasive looks she could assume, and the repetition of a song, to induce him to follow her.

She now found by his starts, and the tremor he was in, that they had entirely quitted that part of the forest he had been used to inhabit: again therefore she took his arm, and when they had walked some hours, Phedora with a transport of delight discovered a well-trodden path, which she resolved at every event not to quit. The fears of the boy encreased as they proceeded, and at length he made several efforts to escape: she let fall her little stock of provisions to hold him with both her hands, conjuring him at the same time not to fly back to his savage mode of life, but commit himself to her protection. "I will love you, I will be your sister!" she cried in a passionate tone of entreaty, as though he could have comprehended her meaning: "do not leave me dear unhappy child! I will take you to Mr. Leuhaupt; you shall be the son he lost—you shall be his Alexy.—Do not leave me!"

Her adjurations were now interrupted by sounds, which seemed almost close to her:
the

the path winded, and she hastily turned her head in an alarm that of her little companion could not exceed : his struggles became still more vehement, and at the same moment he succeeded in breaking from her, she beheld within a few paces of them, some horsemen gazing at her with surprise : but her predominant sensation was regret for having suffered the boy to escape, as she much feared she should never behold him again. Instead of answering the questions they hastily put to her, she earnestly besought them to pursue and recover the child.

The party who had now surrounded her, did not at the first moment comprehend her meaning ; for they had not imagined that the little animal they had seen gallopping off with such swiftness, was a human being ; but when the distress and confusion of Phedora permitted her to explain herself, a detachment of about a dozen men rode in pursuit of the fugitive.

She

She had then leisure to observe, that those who remained wore the military uniform, and concluded from the language they used, that they were Poles: they were indeed a troop of Saxons under the command of a Polish officer, who, with his subalterns, dismounted, and they unitedly poured a volley of enquiries into the ears of Phedora, which her anxiety prevented her from satisfying. Their fixed looks, and animated expressions of admiration, embarrassed and alarmed her, and she endeavoured to avoid them by slowly following the track her little companion had taken, in the hope too of meeting him on his return, and ending by her presence and her caresses, the terror she could so well imagine him to be governed by: but she was still incommoded by the importunate groupe she had turned from, until their colonel perceiving her distress, desired them to forbear, and taking her hand, assured her of his protection.

Phedora

Phedora looked up to him with an air of supplication, and was considerably relieved from her uneasiness, by observing in his countenance a gentleness and compassion that accorded with his words. He was rather past the middle age, and of an aspect so sedate, that it approached to philosophic gravity, but without any expression of moroseness and severity. She summoned courage therefore to enquire of him if the troops were going to Boruffon.

“Our march is directed to Minski,” returned he, “whither we will conduct you; and from thence you can proceed to Boruffon if you wish it.”

She was much pleased with this intelligence, but her satisfaction was counteracted by the continued absence of the fugitive; and even her new friend the Colonel began to be dissatisfied with the length of the chace, and dispatched another party in search of the first.

In

In a short time they all returned together, bringing with them the little mutinous object of their pursuit, whom they had been compelled to bind hand and foot. Phedora ran up to him with great tenderness, and was surprised at the alteration of countenance, the ferocious fullness of his captivity had created. She perceived that the bonds to which he was utterly unused, must very much hurt his limbs, and intreated with tears that they might be loosened. He looked at her with much resentment; yet when she received permission to free his hands, he gave her no other intimation of anger, though his nails had much incommoded several of the soldiers before his arms had been secured.

Phedora was now again assailed by a multitude of questions, which she replied to with as much precision as her agitation would allow of; but it was not until she had related the manner in which she had discovered the child, and every circumstance respecting him she
could

could recollect, that the authoritative voice of the colonel was heard and attended to.

They then renewed their march, and Phedora was placed upon a led horse belonging to one of the troop: she entreated that she might not be separated from the poor little prisoner, and at her earnest request the soldier who carried him, was suffered to ride by her side. She spoke to the boy in the gentlest accent, but he was still fullen, and gave no indication of returning friendship, until she sung to him her Polish song: he then raised his head slowly from his indignant bosom, and made her observe his feet, which were still bound together. She procured them to be loosened, though not entirely freed; for his strength and activity were so great, that no single person could hold him without astonishing effort, unless he was partially confined; and his guard had not been much delighted even with the liberation of his hands.

The

The regiment halted at a small village on the confines of the wood, and Phedora was humanely attended to by the Colonel himself, who offered her some refreshments, which she thankfully accepted, and endeavoured to induce her little wild friend to join with her in the repast; but he rejected her civilities with sullen scorn, and all her efforts to soothe him into a better humour, entirely failed. The Colonel, whose name was Lapuskin, enquired of her if she had yet given the child any particular appellation.

“ I have sometimes called him Alexy,” replied she, “ and he seemed pleased with the sound.”

Lapuskin now tried to obtain his attention by repeating the word; but either his voice or countenance happening to displease the boy, he suddenly darted his claws into the colonel's face, and would have applied his teeth in the same hostile way, had not the soldier who had charge of him, terrified him
by

by several very ungentle blows. Phedora was hurt at the severity of the correction, but as the offence of poor Alexy appeared to warrant it, she was silent. The man unordered, again prepared to tie his hands, an indignity the little culprit resisted with all his strength; he was however compelled to submit, after having received two or three more manual favours from the rough soldier.

Lapushkin interfered not to ameliorate his punishment, and was much astonished on turning to Phedora, to behold her in tears. She ventured once more to intercede for the child, and having at last obtained an unwilling consent from the colonel that she might unbind his little hands, she approached Alexy, who instantly held them up to her: she was affected with this motion, at once bespeaking protection and assistance, and hastened to comply with the request it indicated. His chestnut ringlets had escaped from their confinement, and teased him by falling over his face; Phedora arranged them as she had done

done before, and then again presented to him some fruit and bread, caressing and talking to him, to induce him to eat it.

Her kindness at length overcame his resentment and indignation, and he complied with her wish. The colonel complimented her upon the success of her efforts, and as she appeared so much attached to her little companion, he desired that he might be left to her management: a concession that much pleased her, because she was convinced that harshness and severity had no other effect than that of making him ferocious and unmanageable.

The officers had again flocked round her, conversing with each other upon the singular state of Alexy, and applying to her occasionally for information. In the course of the debate, the ears of Phedora were struck with the unexpected name of Rectzizi: she started in great emotion, and repeating it in an accent of surprise, turned hastily to the person

person so addressed: but she beheld not the Restzizi her heart so promptly acknowledged.

“Do you know the Count?” asked Colonel Lapuskin.

“I do indeed know Count Restzizi,” replied she, sighing, “but this gentleman is not him.”

“My father perhaps,” said the young man: “but tell me—are you the peasant girl old Leuhaupt brought up?”

Is this, thought Phedora, the brother of Ulmeri—of Cassimir? Can he be thus nearly related to them?

“Yes,” she replied, “I am that peasant girl. Will you excuse my presumption in enquiring if you have lately seen the Countess, and your amiable sister?”

“I saw them about a month back at Grodno,” he returned: “Ulmeri spoke much of you—but the Countess my mother supposes that you are in the suite of her friend
Baroness

Baroness Hartsen : wherefore did she dismiss you ?”

Phedora blushed deeply at an interrogation so mortifying, which tacitly charged her with guilt or misconduct, and with an air more haughty than her features had ever yet been cast into, she remained silent. Lapuskin, who was extremely disgusted with the offensive arrogance of the young Count Reetzizi, ordered the troops to resume their march instantly, and thus relieved her from her distress, which was evidently stronger even than her displeasure.

Phedora was again placed upon the horse, and late in the evening they reached Minski. The astonishment and terror of Alexy, at every object which there struck his eyes, was very evident ; and his discomposure was not to be soothed even by the caresses of Phedora, to whom he clung with anxious solicitude.

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She was placed by Colonel Lapuskin, with her little companion, in the care of an officer's widow, a woman of a decent and mild appearance, who exerted herself to make her fair guest forget her recent fatigues. Here Alexy was supplied with cloathing, and when Phedora produced her three rubles, the whole of her wealth, to pay for it, she was informed that the Colonel had ordered the garments at his own expence. The boy violently objected to incommode himself with this essential badge of civilization; but at length the gentle perseverance of Phedora overcame his opposition, and with a little difficulty she executed the task of dressing him. He then surveyed himself with admiration not unmingled with delight, and when she checked him for putting his hands to the ground, he appeared to comprehend her, and obeyed the indications her motions gave.

Now that he had lost all traces of his native wood, he showed stronger symptoms of terror, and less of ferocity, and constantly
flew

flew to Phedora for protection when any stranger appeared before him : he was less fearful of women than of men, in proportion as their voices were more soft and their persons more feminine ; but he was unwilling to suffer the approaches of either to any kind of acquaintance or fellowship, his first friend only excepted.

Phedora was very anxious to renew her conversation with the young Count Rectzizi, displeasing as were his sentiments and manners, to gain some intelligence of his family or of the Baroness Hartfen. The first morning of her residence at Minski, she listened eagerly for every step, and the slightest sound that appeared to announce a visitor, in the hope that he would so far condescend to interest himself in her fate, as to make some enquiry concerning her, wholly different as he was to every person she had yet seen who bore the respected name of Rectzizi.

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At length a voice which appeared to be his, drew her to the door of her apartment, and she heard the mistress of the house deny that she had any such inmate as the enquirer described, which Phedora strongly suspected to be herself. Surprised at this assertion, she walked forward, and discovered that it was indeed the count who was seeking her: he cast upon the poor woman a haughty look of reproach, and she retired extremely disconcerted.

“Lapufkin,” cried he, without any previous address, “has endeavoured to keep your residence from my knowledge, and only the fame of your little savage pointed it out to me. I come charming Phedora, to offer you every service in my power: if you will accept my protection, you shall need no other; and you may then despise the displeasure of that little devil the Baroness.”

Much as Phedora disliked this young man, and little as she had reason to imagine him

endued with great delicacy, this unqualified proposition from the brother of Cassimir Rectzizi, struck her with astonishment, horror, and an anguish she could not controul, and bursting into tears, she was hastily withdrawing, but he detained her.

He saw his error, and offered something like an apology for the unguarded freedom he had used; but it required all the self-command Phedora possessed, to enable her to conquer her repugnance and aversion, so far as to remain in the same room with him, whilst she made the enquiries her heart so eagerly prompted. To soften her displeasure, he gave her all the intelligence in his power: the Baroness, he said, was at Bielsk when he last heard of her, and she had quitted Grodno only two days before the Countess and his sister entered it, a circumstance that much surprised them, because she was well aware of their approach.

Phedora

Phedora secretly accounted for a conduct that appeared so inexplicable : " The dear, the mistaken Baronefs," thought she, " fupposes that I am no more ; and whilst her heart reproaches her with being the cause of the accident she deplores, she could not endure to behold those worthy beings who like herself, have deigned to take an interest in my fate." She would not however mention this surmise to the young count, because it would bring on an explanation she was too much irritated to give. He then continued to inform her that his mother had taken advantage of an escort of troops marching to Lublin, to rejoin his father who had been there some time.

Phedora heard this with much anxiety, as it wholly precluded every hope of throwing herself into their protection ; and the motions of the Baronefs were so uncertain, that she could not depend upon her residence in any place.

To put an end to the doubts of the count, as to her own wishes and intentions, she entreated his assistance to procure for her a situation, however menial, in the house of some lady at Minski; "a benefit," she added, "I shall thankfully acknowledge as the most acceptable you could confer upon me."

"Phedora," cried he, "you must not thus degrade yourself: my heart, which sensibly acknowledges your perfections, would never cease to upbraid me, were I to suffer this."

He was proceeding in a strain equally offensive to her, when a violent uproar in the street, immediately before the house, attracted the attention of both. Alexy was terrified, and throwing himself into the arms of his fair protectress, trembled excessively: whilst the count quitted the room to enquire into the cause of the disturbance, which increased every moment; and the mistress of the mansion entered it abruptly, to entreat

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that the child might be shown to the croud assembled at the door. For the inhabitants of Minski having heard from the soldiers of the little wild boy caught in the neighbouring forest, had flocked to behold him, when they had succeeded in discovering his residence.

But Alexy would not by any means consent to this exhibition in his present state of perturbation and alarm; he hid himself in a corner, to which he drew Phedora; and her compassion for the agony his sudden starts and tremor expressed, would not permit her to force him from his retreat.

The young count incensed at the interruption he had met with, and the insolent clamours of the people, repelled their curiosity by the rhetoric of blows, which he dealt round him without discrimination, by the assistance of a cane he snatched from one of the offenders; and this being magnified into the rumour of a military affray, soon reached

the ears of Colonel Lapuskin, who hastened to the spot with a small party of his regiment, to quell the disturbance.

The populace enraged at the haughty deportment of their assailer, had begun to resist his chastisement, and a most serious riot had nearly taken place, when Lapuskin appeared, who having enquired into the circumstances attending it, immediately put Rectzizi under arrest, to pacify the resentment of the people, who not without some reason, conceived themselves mal-treated. They then dispersed very peaceably, perfectly satisfied with the event, and wholly forgetting the primary cause of the disturbance, in the triumph that attended the humiliation of their opponent.

Some time after, the colonel visited Phedora, who received him with all the gratitude his services merited: but Alexy, who had not lost the remembrance of the rough discipline which had been inflicted upon him, and

and had perception enough to know that it was for his offence to Lapuskin, regarded him with much anger ; and the colonel insisted, as a preliminary to any conversation between himself and Phedora, that the boy's nails should be reduced to a more reasonable size, a ceremony she had not yet ventured to attempt. Alexy submitted however to the operation with tolerable patience, and this important affair being adjusted, Lapuskin proceeded to enquire of Phedora, how far her knowledge of the Rectzizi family extended.

Her answer convinced him of the generous interest they took in her fortunes, and he congratulated her upon possessing such worthy and powerful protectors ; but insinuated that she must not rely upon receiving disinterested services from the young count : he then added, that he had been employed the whole of the morning in endeavouring to procure for her a situation suited to her youth and sex, and for this purpose he had ventured

to make use of the names of the Baroneſs Hartſen and Madame Rectzizi, a meaſure he had been lead to adopt, by ſome converſation he had previously had with the count. "I at length," continued he, "met with a lady of ſome diſtinction, who was ſo much pleaſed with the detail I gave her of your adventure in the foreſt, that ſhe voluntarily propoſed to receive you and Alexy into her houſe."

Phedora was tranſported with this intelligence, and ſo eager to ſecure a good fortune thus unhopd for, that ſhe requested to be taken immediately to this conſiderate and hofpitable lady : but Lapuſkin informed her, that he had appointed the next day for her removal and that of Alexy, who unconſcious of his efforts to ſerve him, ſtill kept aloof, and reſuſed to be reconciled.

The colonel apologized to Phedora before he withdrew, for having deſired the miſtreſs of the houſe to reſuſe admittance to the young officers of the regiment, which he entreated her

her to believe he had very good reason for : and in her turn she excused the eagerness she had displayed to see the count, by mentioning her earnest wishes to learn some particulars of his family.

“ You are naturally prejudiced in his favour,” returned Lapuskin ; “ but he is—to morrow however you will be in the protection of the Countess Waldowick, and my anxiety on the subject will be at an end.”

Phedora warmly thanked him, and he then took his leave, with a promise of returning early in the morning, to conduct her and the child to the habitation of their new protectress.

CHAP. VIII.

—————“ These pass their days
“ In feasting and mirth, light wantonness and laughter ;
“ Piping and playing, minstrelsy and masking,
“ Till life flees from them like an idle dream ;
“ A shew of mummerly without a meaning,”

SHE was delighted at not being compelled to part with Alexy, for whom she had conceived a very tender affection, and employed the whole day in endeavours to humanise and make him more engaging, that he might win the favour of the countess, upon whom his welfare now seemed to depend. He received her instructions with docility, and attended to them with tolerable exactness: his attachment to her, and confidence in her friendship and kindness hourly increased, and he would not suffer her to leave him a moment,

ment, but followed her from place to place with the most jealous watchfulness, and apparent anxiety of her removal from him.

At length Lapuskin appeared, and Phedora taking leave of her inoffensive hostess, clasped the hand of Alexy in hers, and attended the worthy colonel into the street, with a haste and eagerness that wholly excluded from her memory the probability there was, that the deportment of her little companion would procure them a more numerous escort in their way to the house of Madame Walde-
wick, than was either expected or desired. But the inconvenience immediately occurred to her, when she observed Alexy endeavouring to walk as he had been accustomed, upon his hands equally with his feet: she tried to make him advance in the manner she had taught him, but the sight of a number of people passing to and fro, the noise of carriages and the sight of horses, terrified and rendered him intractable.

The populace again assembled to behold him, on the first intimation of his public appearance, and before Lapuskin could secure his fair companion in the dwelling of the countess, they were surrounded by a concourse, from whom they found it impossible to escape. The colonel was very much embarrassed by this unpleasant impediment, but unlike the impetuous count, he preserved his temper, and concluded that his most reasonable method of conduct would be to suffer the people to gaze until they were tired, when they would most probably withdraw, and leave him at liberty to proceed: but his judgment in this instance happened unfortunately to be erroneous; for the multitude which immediately encircled Phedora and her little trembling companion, refused to give up their stations to others, whose curiosity was equally importunate, and after many entreaties, remonstrances, and numberless altercations, a most furious scuffle ensued, which Lapuskin vainly endeavoured to put an end to.

Phedora,

Phedora, however terrified, would not quit the arm of Alexy, who clung to her with a trepidation that encreased in proportion as the voices of the opponents became louder and more discordant. The contention was now almost universal, and the Colonel was borne from her amidst his zealous endeavours to procure a return of peace. Whilst she was debating with herself if she should request some of the people round her to conduct her to the Countess Waldowick, or await the return of Lapuskin, some men, apparently domestics, invited her into a large mansion, not far from the place where she stood.

The agony of poor Alexy induced her to accept their hospitality; and having been led into the house, she was immediately conducted to an apartment decorated with much splendour, where she beheld a woman of about forty years of age, of an aspect extremely haughty and forbidding, who surveyed her and her little companion with an
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air of unfeeling curiosity that rather shocked Phedora. At length the lady broke silence ;

“ I believe,” said she, “ you must be the young woman whom Colonel Lapuskin mentioned to me as having been found with that little animal in the forest between this town and the confines of Mieslaw : I have promised him to take charge of you, until the Countess Rectzizi, or Baroness Hartsen, who patronise you as I understand, shall claim you of me. You may consider yourself therefore as one of my suite, which is very numerous already ; but to confer an obligation on Countess Rectzizi, or Madame Hartsen, though I do not personally know either of them, I will enlarge my train of attendants, and admit you and that little savage of the number. Tell me what tricks he can play ? let me hear him howl—I understand that he climbs like a squirrel—make him run up that door-way.”

Phedora

Phedora gently intimated that Alexy would not be compelled to do any thing; and that it was only by the tenderest treatment that he could be made tractable and submissive. She then acknowledged with thankfulness, how acceptable to her was the offered protection of the Countess Waldowick; though she could not avoid feeling a secret disgust at the ungracious manner in which she had announced it to her, and the haughty air with which the lady now listened to her expressions of gratitude, confirmed the dislike that had stolen upon her.

Madame Waldowick suddenly recollecting herself, thought proper to enquire the cause of the disturbance which had separated Phedora from Colonel Lapuskin; and then as suddenly interrupting the explanation she had demanded, "How!" exclaimed she, "were the people really so eager to behold you and this little strange creature? Well," she added with an air of satisfied vanity, "you now belong to me; and they will not be able to
drive

drive themselves into my house to satisfy their vulgar curiosity. The young Count Rectzizi is under arrest I am told, for preventing you both from being torn to pieces by the multitude: he must be contented therefore to confine himself to his quarters for a week or ten days to expiate his generous warmth, for which I honour him; but just at this moment the populace must not be offended with impunity by the military."

These sentiments, expressed with all the airs that might well be expected to accompany them, sufficiently informed Phedora of the disposition and temper of the countess; and the number of her attendants, of which she had boasted, and the style of every thing around her, confirmed the surmises she could not avoid allowing herself to form, of the absurd vanity and ridiculous ambition that governed her.

She felt now for the first time, all the horrors of dependance and poverty; and accused

fed herself of folly, in having left the peaceful cottage of Rubenski: upon casting her eyes however upon poor Alexy, who stood frightened and fullen by her side, she revoked her sentiment of regret, and for his sake rejoiced that she had quitted the venerable Matheowna, and her worthy descendants.

When the countess was tired of surveying her new acquisition, some of her women were called, and she desired them to see Phedora and her little companion properly accommodated with cloathing and shown to an apartment. They both very readily followed the attendants out, and after a proper compliment of gazing and wondering on the part of the whole household, who assembled in the anti-room to behold the wild creatures from the forest, they were conducted to a wretched nook, divided by a decayed partition; and this Phedora found was to be the lodging room of Alexy and herself: but as the way to it, and the apartments she passed through, after she had quitted the suite the countess
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immediately occupied, were equally forlorn and desolate, she thought not of complaining, though she could not avoid feeling extremely surprised at the magnificence and wretchedness the same house exhibited.

The women now poured into her ears such a number of enquiries concerning her little companion, and her own mode of living in the wood, that it required her utmost gentleness of temper, and all the exertion of patience she could use, to answer them with good humour.

The poor child was again required to show his tricks, and Phedora could scarcely induce them to forbear teizing him, in order to satisfy their curiosity, by forcing him into motion. At length however they left her, to ruminate upon her situation, and sigh at the apprehension of what would probably be her future fate.

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When Alexy found himself alone with his fair friend, he recovered in some degree his spirits; but he had now observation enough to comprehend, that when she seemed sad and wiped her eyes, all was not well: he had been alarmed at the eager looks and hurried enquiries of the attendants, and instinctively concluding them to be enemies, kept his eyes fixed upon the door through which they had passed, with an aspect of terror; Phedora no sooner observed this, than she was solicitous to remove the impression. She smiled upon him, repeating in a soft voice the name of Alexy, which he began to understand as his own appellation; and always appearing particularly pleased with the sound, replied to it with answering smiles of approbation.

Having sung him into perfect satisfaction, she amused herself with teaching him to repeat after her, her own christian name: it was not the first time she had made the effort, and it now succeeded beyond her expectation; but his tones were still harsh, discor-

dant and loud, though not to the degree they had originally been. She remained thus employed for some time, uninterrupted by any of the inhabitants of the house, and might perhaps have been longer neglected, had not the countess required her to bring Alexy into her presence, to be exhibited to a visitor.

Phedora was dissatisfied with the mandate, which gave her to understand that the poor child was considered by Madame Waldowick not only as her undoubted property, to be kept for the absurd gratification of her vanity, but as an absolute monkey, or any other wild animal. She followed her conductor however, without any very apparent symptom of discontent; and Alexy, who had now recovered from the panic into which he had been thrown, accompanied her without reluctance.

On entering the apartment of the countess, Phedora could scarcely persuade herself that she was still in the same mansion: here the utmost profusion reigned; but the place allotted

allotted to her and Alexy, the demon Want seemed to have made her most favoured abode.

She found with her new patroness, two Polish ladies, whose manners neither partook of the sedate mildness that generally characterised those of Madame Rectzizi; nor of the brilliant vivacity that enlivened the society the Baroness Hartsen moved in: they were on the contrary, cold, ceremonious and formal; reserved without modesty; haughty and proud, yet not irreproachable in themselves.

When Phedora had been in their presence five minutes, she was perfectly satisfied that it was impossible she should ever again be solicitous to obtain the same honour, and to compleat her disgust, the tricks of the little savage were peremptorily called for: she was forming some speech to procure the ceremony to be excused, when Alexy perceiving some refreshments which had been placed in
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the room for the visitors, galloped suddenly up to the table where they stood, and plunging his hand without hesitation into every thing he saw, proceeded to satisfy his hunger, not forgetting however, to invite Phedora to a participation of his good fortune, by looks which she alone understood. It gave her pain to check him, because she could not fail to recollect that his fast had not been broken since he had entered the house of the countess, an omission of the duties of hospitality she knew not how to mention to the mistress of it.

Alexy disregarded her admonition however, and continued to devour the delicacies he beheld, in spite of the anger of Madame Waldowick, who perfectly satisfied with this sample of his tricks, ordered Phedora to take the animal away. As she was obeying the command, Colonel Lapuskin was announced, and she met him in the anti-chamber.

“ I have

"I have been searching for you," exclaimed he, "all over Minski, and only learnt five minutes back, that you were safe under this roof, which I congratulate you upon having gained."

Phedora hastily expressed her gratitude for his disinterested friendship, and her thankfulness for the protection he had been the means of procuring for her; and the good colonel, with a countenance of satisfaction, then passed on to pay his compliments to the countess.

When Lapuskin had left her, her progress was again interrupted by the attendants who were in waiting, that they might view the little Alexy at their leisure. One of them rather more considerate than the rest, run to procure some food for Phedora as well as the child, whose misdemeanor brought to their recollection the neglect she had experienced. But as she by no means approved the company she was in, she entreated that her meals
might

might be brought to her apartment, and taking with her the refreshment that was now offered, she withdrew thither, followed by Alexy, who extremely pleased with his exploit, bounded like an antelope in defiance of the embarrassment his garments gave him.

When they had been about an hour alone, Phedora, as well as her companion, was equally surprised and delighted with the unexpected sound of music. Alexy almost motionless with undescrivable sensations, gazed round him to discover whence the pleasing noise issued, and Phedora charmed as she was with a luxury she had been so little used to enjoy, could not avoid attending to the animated expression that lighted up the countenance of the boy: he jumped with ecstasy, and tried to mock the varied sounds, then suddenly checking himself, listened in the most eager attitude of attention.

The Countess Waldowick was not a lover of harmony or melody; but it was absolutely
necessary

necessary that she should imitate the extravagancies of her female friends who never failed to have music during their meals; and her vanity was equal to the absurdity of retaining a band, such as it was, in her suite, though she felt an utter indifference to the sounds for which she payed so considerably. Her satisfaction was now extremely augmented from being enabled to outvie her competitors, by producing for their amusement, a wild boy from the forest of Minski, and the heroine of a wonderful tale, which had been embellished from the mouth of Colonel Lapuskin to a most incredible degree of the marvellous; and if the fair adventurer had spent an hundred years in the most impenetrable forest, inhabited by the strangest monsters imagination had ever conceived, her story could not have been told or listened to with more signs of eagerness, admiration and astonishment.

Phedora unconscious of being the subject of conversation in the high-born circle assembled in the apartment of the Countess, had opened the door of hers, the more distinctly to hear the notes of the musicians, which were borne to her through a variety of turnings and compartments that interrupted the airs they played, and only gave the sounds to her at intervals: she was desirous of being nearer to them that she might enjoy without alloy, a pleasure to which both herself and Alexy were so sensible; and at length a female domestic passing by the end of the passage into which she had crept, good-naturedly conducted her to a station where she might remain unobserved by the visitors of the Countess, who entered and retreated through the chamber where the band played: but the raptures of Alexy, whose soul seemed tuned to harmony, soon attracted the train of attendants round them; and when their lady was officiously informed that the boy was exhibiting his tricks, she ordered him to be admitted to her

her presence. He would not move however without Phedora, and she was therefore compelled to accompany him, though from what she had already seen of Countess Waldowick's associates, she was not ambitious to appear any more before them.

Her little companion could scarcely be forced from his situation, so fearful was he of losing the satisfaction he experienced; and even the numerous assemblage he was led to, notwithstanding they all eagerly surrounded him, could not steal his attention from the music. The countess caused it to cease, and in a moment the features of Alexy fell; he looked up to Phedora with an air of disappointment, and by a thousand antic motions, tried to make her comprehend that he wished to hear the sounds again.

The noblesse of Minski were in raptures to behold the human form placed in attitudes which society reject as ungrateful and

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uncouth;

uncouth; and Phedora, lovely as she was, scarcely claimed a small share of the admiration universally lavished on the frolics of the little savage: the ladies indeed, secretly thought that he would have been infinitely more entertaining, had he not been perpetually looking up to his beautiful companion, for the caresses with which she soothed him into patience and gentleness.

The countess felt a proud superiority over her guests, from the delicious circumstance of possessing a treasure of amusement they had not the power of returning in kind, when she attended their parties; and her good-humour was so much increased by the reflection, that she ordered some sweetmeats to be given to the child, wholly forgetting at the same time to inquire if he had had any more wholesome or substantial food. She then commanded the band to play as usual, and again the circle were in extacies at the soundings, the gestures and voice of Alexy.

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At length when the whole party was sufficiently tired of this rational amusement, he was dismissed; and Phedora delighted to escape from a society that displeased her more than any she had yet been in, very gladly withdrew with the boy.

In a few days, by her assiduous attention, he could utter two or three words, and comprehend several sentences: charmed with the success of her efforts, and becoming each day more attached to her Alexy, the instructions she bestowed upon him, filled up the time that would otherwise have hung very heavily on her hands: yet still her fondest affections were directed towards the absent friends of her infancy, and those of her maturer age; many a sigh too was breathed with the name of Cassimir, unkind as he had been to her at their last meeting.

She longed to hear from the mouth of Catherine the particulars of their melancholy

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journey

journey to Casan; of the manner in which they passed their hours there, and what had become of the unhappy Stenaus: and as earnestly did she wish to relate to her beloved companion all that had befallen herself since their separation. "How kind would Mr. Leuhapt be to Alexy!" thought she: "How delightfully would he be instructed in those virtues, without which his rational faculties had better have remained wholly in the shell of that unconscious ignorance, that still partially envelopes them."

Phedora learnt of the domestics that the countess was a native of Warsaw, and they conjectured that she would probably return thither, when the disturbances that agitated that capital should have wholly ceased: she knew that to reach it, it was necessary to pass through Bielsk; and this circumstance renovated all her hopes of meeting either the Baroness at the one place, or the Rectzizi family at the other, and softened likewise the

the unpleasant dependence in which she was involved. Her haughty patroness would not assign her any useful employment in the family, because she affirmed, what was indeed a fact, that she had already more attendants and people in her service than she had the least occasion for: but the interior of the household was notwithstanding very indifferently regulated, and whilst the most splendid sumptuousness prevailed immediately under the eye of the countess, the most abject poverty marked the accommodations, if indeed they could be called such, of the inferior part of her train: yet they were satisfied, because they lived in indolence and inactivity, and were not without opportunities, each one according to his station, of pillaging their inconsiderate mistress, who imagined herself of too much importance in the world, to examine into her own affairs, and regulate the distribution of her revenue.

Phedora and the little Alexy still continued to be called for, when Madame Waldowick had visitors, otherwise she thought so little of them, that had they perished under the influence of a sudden disease, it is probable she would not have discovered the accident, until they had been summoned to exhibit to her company. At length the child and his fair companion being one day sent for at an unusual time, she saw with much satisfaction Colonel Lapuskin in the circle, who advanced towards her with an air of kindness and interest she had not lately experienced, and took an opportunity of inquiring in a low voice if she was satisfied with her situation. She prevailed on herself to reply in the affirmative, both because she had not any particular cause of complaint, and in compliment to the honest worth of the good Colonel, whose friendly solicitude was much gratified with the circumstance.

Whilst she was speaking, the young Count Rectzizi entered the apartment, and Lapuskin

kin informed her that his confinement had that morning ceased: "I was not mistaken," added he, "in supposing that the first use he would make of his liberty would be to call here: but as you are pleased with the protection of Madame Waldowick, I hope you will not be persuaded by this young man to give it up."

And then without waiting her reply, he expressed his surprise at the improved manners of Alexy, who could now understand a number of phrases, and speak others in a voice not devoid of harmony.

Rectzizi having been greeted by those of the set to whom he was known, could not forbear casting upon Phedora a look of reproach as he addressed her: but the Colonel prevented it from being translated into language, by calling his attention to the evident civilization of their little acquaintance, whom the count recognised with the same sentiment of wonder as Lapuskin had expressed:

The countenance of Alexy was indeed much enlightened, and grew daily more interesting as his mind became enlarged: but the progress he made towards reason and language was rather checked by Countess Waldowick, who was far from commending the unwearyed efforts of his fair friend, and they were never from thence, used in her presence.

Phedora observed too, that her mode of conduct towards herself and the child were not so haughty as she had been accustomed to remark them, now that the presence of Lapuskin and the Count reminded her that they were only a kind of deposit committed to her charge: neither were they dismissed as usual, until the doors closed upon the Colonel and Rectzizi, and then Madame Waldowick with an insolence encreased from the restraint it had suffered, commanded them to retire.

On the following day all was bustle and confusion throughout the house; and Phe-

dora after a number of fruitless inquiries, learnt that the countess and her suite were immediately to depart for Warsaw: intelligence that gave her inexpressible satisfaction.

It was some time before the reason of this sudden resolution was discovered: but after the domestics had spent hours in guessing the occasion of the journey, which might have been far better spent in preparing for it, they were informed that it originated in the impertinent efforts of some of their lady's friends to rival her in her possessions, and that they had actually sent to the neighbouring forest in search of other Alexies.

Those of the officers of her household who had connexions in Warsaw, though they laughed heartily at the cause, rejoiced in the effect, whilst others who had been engaged from Minski and its vicinity, curst the forest and all its unaccountable inhabitants. Alexy was too universal a favorite however, to suffer from the consequences of their spleen, and

Phedora too much respected and beloved by every individual of the house, to hear a word of dissatisfaction levelled at her, upon an occasion in which she was rather a party concerned.

The young Count Rectzizi hastened to the habitation of Madame Waldowick the moment he heard of the projected journey, to charge Phedora with some letters to his family, whom he imagined she might probably meet at Warsaw, and others to several of his friends there, in which he thought proper to recommend the fair Rubenski to their notice as a young person his mother much regarded. These last he explained to Phedora with great condescension, and informed her that he had thus provided as far as possible for the unpleasant circumstance of her not finding either the countess at the capital, or Madame Hartsen at Bielsk.

She readily conceived that these officious cares were meant as a kind of peace offering
for

for a conduct he was not willing to permit his family to hear of, and with her usual sweetness of temper contrived to dissipate his anxiety on that head, and very sincerely thanked him for his present attention to her happiness and welfare.

Colonel Lapuskin failed not to call at the habitation of the countess to bid adieu to Phedora, who once more and with grateful zeal, earnestly thanked him for the almost paternal solicitude his conduct had evinced, and could not see him depart without tears.

At length Madame Waldowick, with her suite well armed, began her journey to Warsaw. Phedora, much against her own wishes, had the honor of being admitted into her carriage to attend upon Alexy, who was to amuse the tedious hours the countess expected to encounter. They travelled as is the custom in Poland, both night and day, and Phedora independant of the fatigue she naturally expected to share, was compelled

to exert herself perpetually to restrain the vivacity of her little charge, and keep him silent and motionless, whenever the *Padrona* closed her eyes in a real or affected slumber. If this could not be effected, they were both subjected to remonstrances, neither gentle in themselves, nor calmly delivered.

For the present too, Phedora was obliged to give up her assiduous cares for the improvement of poor Alexy, as the countess had almost forbidden them, because she did not chuse that he should become any other than the little savage of the forest of Minski, from whose eccentricity she promised herself not a little distinction at Warsaw, as the possessor of the curiosity.

In two days they arrived without accident at Novogrodeck, and having remained there twenty-four hours, that Madame Waldowick might recruit her strength, they again proceeded under the welcome escort of a Russ regiment, which was marching to join
the

the army of Prince Mönzikoff on the banks of the Vistula. The countess compelled to accommodate herself to their motions, hastened or retarded her progress, as they lingered or advanced on their way: but consoled herself for this humiliating necessity, by displaying her importance to the officers of the regiment, who under pretence of amusing themselves with little Alexy, seized every opportunity of conversing with his fair companion. From one of these Russians Phedora learnt, that his sovereign was advancing from the Ukraine to the west of Poland, where there would be a general rendezvous of all the distinguished Poles, in the interest of Augustus, who were hastening to welcome the conqueror of the Swede, in Warsaw their capital. *

She was charmed with the prospect this intelligence afforded her, of beholding the Count and Countess Rectzizi, and would have endured

* Vide History of Poland.

endured any fatigue to have hastened the journey : but her impatience and anxiety were little attended to by Madame Waldowick, who wondered extremely how so insignificant a being should possibly prefer one spot to another, or care whither the pleasure of her superiors should conduct her.

It had been the intention of the countess to rest again at Bielsk, and Phedora secretly hoped to hear of the Baroness Hartfen at this place. To her infinite mortification however, the regiment under whose protection they securely travelled, heard some tidings there which made them hastily press forward for Brock ; and Madame Waldowick not being able to comprehend from the evasive answers of the commanding officer, the reason of this sudden movement, followed his example, and remained only ten minutes at Bielsk to procure a reinforcement of provisions : a circumstance the poor disappointed Rubenski most sincerely bewailed. The countess herself was half
dead

dead with fatigue when she arrived at Brock, and for this reason, herself and her suite reposed there for two days. They were now to lose the benefit of their escort, as the regiment was not for the present to cross the river Bug.

Though the circumstance had not been at all attended to, Phedora had been peculiarly a sufferer from this hasty journey ; as Alexy, wearied to excess with remaining so long in the same position, and unused to the jolting of a carriage, relied on the protecting care of his fair friend, and took refuge in a profound sleep, which generally lasted sufficiently to make her arms ake almost beyond endurance ; yet, if she withdrew them a moment, the child by some means incommoded the countess, and Phedora was vehemently reprehended for suffering the little savage to half murder her with his boisterous motions ; she was therefore not a little delighted at the respite she

now

now enjoyed, even though it retarded her arrival at Warsaw.

Madame Waldowick having rested a day and night at Brock, began to think of pursuing her journey : she was advised to take advantage of a small vessel sailing to Thorn, which would convey her, and a part of her suite, within twenty miles of Warsaw ; and as she was sufficiently tired of the fatigue and inconvenience of her carriage to receive this proposition with pleasure, she secured a passage for herself, Phedora, Alexy, and three or four domestics, and sent the rest of her attendants forwards to a small town on the south side of the Bug, nearly opposite to Skava on the Vistula.

Phedora heard of this arrangement with more pleasure than she chose to express ; but when her little companion was to be put on board, his alarm and terror on finding himself far from the Bank, and borne he knew not how over the stream, was a source
of

of diversion to the countess, and of distress to Phedora, who vainly endeavoured to appease his fears. But a very short time almost reconciled him to a circumstance it was impossible to make him comprehend; and though he was still rather uneasy, he watched the receding stream with an attention that marked curiosity not wholly unmixed with pleasure.

Phedora reflected on her voyage from Skow to Mogiloff; but the country round was neither so diversified nor so majestic as Luthuania and Meislaw. She had often felt much interested in the fate of the peasants she had been separated from in the forest of Minski: and it had occurred to her that the little Alexy had been the innocent means of terrifying them all to the sudden and almost unconscious flight in which she had so far outstripped her companions; an event she now rejoiced at on her own account, and that of the child.

Madame

Madame Waldowick met her suite at the appointed place, and entirely refreshed from her former fatigue, immediately set out for Warsaw, which she reached in a few hours. Phedora felt her bosom flutter on beholding the place which she pleased herself with supposing contained a part of the family of Rectzizi, and regarded the clustered buildings, whilst she was yet at a small distance, with as lively a satisfaction, as if by the force of imagination alone, she could have discovered the roof that sheltered those revred friends, whom her heart panted to recognise.

Some of the domestics of the countess had preceded her to give notice of her approach at her own mansion ; for she possessed a magnificent house at Warsaw, where she lived in a style of extravagance, few even of the Polish Nobles chose to surpass, notwithstanding their efforts to rival each other in absurd luxuries.

On

On entering her habitation, she forgot to welcome to it the poor neglected Phedora, who was, however, too much occupied with her own ideas to notice the omission of a ceremony she had not expected: whilst Alexy perfectly careless of the dissatisfied looks of his patroness, began as usual to seek his own amusement from whatever fell in his way that could afford him any. His unconscious presumption offended her, and Phedora was desired to take him away, who ever delighted to obey this command, led him out of the state apartments, and inquired of the domestics what corner was to be assigned to her and her little companion. She found their lodging-rooms rather superior to those they had occupied at Minski, but far from abounding in conveniences: — She took possession of them however, with satisfaction, and almost immediately resumed her employment of instructing Alexy.

She was compelled to wait until the present confusion was a little subsided, and the servants again sunk into their accustomed inactivity,

inactivity, before she could venture to trust any of them with the letters of the young count Rectzizi, or request them to learn if any part of the family were then at Warsaw. She had not much hope of meeting the Baroness Hartfen there ; yet she determined not to miss an opportunity of acquainting her that she still existed, by neglecting any means of inquiry that might occur.

The town was now in a tumult of agitation, from the supposition of the Emperor of Russia being on the point of visiting it : He was then at Lublin, and Phedora was not without a hope that this great man's presence would draw to Warsaw the Count Rectzizi and his lady, if they were not already there : the flattering expectation of embracing the gentle Ulmeri ; perhaps too, of hearing from her the hitherto inexplicable motive of Cassimer's strange and unusual conduct, now wholly filled her imagination, and formed the subject of her dreams.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

“ It wounds indeed,

“ To bear affronts too great to be forgiven,

“ And not have power to punish.”

I N the remarkable commotions of the Polish government at that period, there were many to be found, who incapable of regarding with interest and attention the scenes that passed before their eyes, felt themselves only occupied by the trifles which alone could arrest their observation : of this number were the Countess Waldowick and her most favoured acquaintance. Their wonted parties of insipid amusement took their usual course, and the unlooked for fate of a few who had formerly been of their society,

society, but were become victims to the various interests they had espoused, was spoken of with cool unconcern, whilst the same emulative rivalry animated their extravagant follies, and still more absurd ambitions.

Alexy was now of a sudden excessively caressed by his patroness ; he was perpetually in her apartment, where he was suffered to commit all the mischief his frolics were generally attended with, and Phedora no longer permitted to check his wild sallies, or tease the dear little animal with instruction. She grieved at this repeated prohibition, and lamented the consequences to poor Alexy, who though he failed not to discover his increased importance, still evinced for his fair friend the tenderest affection, and would not allow her to be absent from him many minutes together.

At length when a tolerable calm was restored, and the bustle of an ill-regulated household was no longer very sensibly felt,

Phedora

Phedora ventured to request one of the domestics, who appeared attached to Alexy and herself, to enquire for the Count and Countess Rectzizi ; and gave to his care those letters their elder son had charged her with, to be conveyed to the persons to whom they were addressed, and from whom she thought it was most probable he could learn the desired intelligence.

The man faithful to his trust, executed her commission with punctuality, though he was sensible that he hazarded the severe displeasure of his mistress, should this good office be discovered by her. Phedora learnt from what he had collected, that Ulmeri and her parents were still at Lublin, whither likewise those friends to whom the young Count had applied, had flown to behold the admired conquerer of Pultowa. She was therefore obliged to wait their return with what patience she could assume ; and gratefully thanking her messenger for the assiduity he had already displayed, entreated him to

extend his enquiries still further, and endeavour to inform her if Baroness Hartfen was at present in Warsaw : a service he very readily promised to seek an opportunity of rendering her.

Alexy was become the idol of the circle that assembled at the house of Madame Waldowick, and though the arch tricks he was now encouraged to play, might offend a few at whom they pointed, they entertained and delighted every one else. His patroness was in raptures at the reputation he had acquired ; for by this time, the little savage of the Forest of Minski was universally spoken of. Phedora could only grieve at the ignorance in which the Countess chose to retain him ; but in spite of her ungenerous precaution, the natural genius of the child, his retentive memory, and facility to imitate sounds, aided by the stolen assistance of his fair friend, soon enabled him to utter his wants, and a few of the ideas that insensibly began to unfold themselves in his mind.

The

The Countess was displeased with his progress in civilization, but fortunately she possessed not the art of forcing back his faculties to their former inactivity.

Alexy now accompanied her when she visited her friends, but he could not be persuaded to leave Phedora at home, and when Madame Waldowick out of humour at being compelled to admit her perpetually into her society, once forced him from her, he lost his vivacity and good temper, and was no longer entertaining: from that time she was considered as a necessary incumbrance, and always attended the child and his ungracious patroness in their excursions abroad, and in the apartment of the Countess at home.

Madame Waldowick taking a sudden fancy one morning to exhibit poor Alexy to a woman of rank with whom she was slightly acquainted, immediately ordered her equipage to conduct them to her house: upon their arrival at it, Phedora who was judged

R 2

unworthy

unworthy of the honour of being admitted as a guest, was stationed in an anti-chamber, until her little wild friend could no longer be pacified without her.

She withdrew from the crowd of attendants, who followed her steps with eyes of curiosity and admiration, and placed herself at a window which overlooked the courtyard gates from which every visitor entered. After gazing some time at those who passed and repassed, with ideas however that wandered far from the spot, her attention was attracted by a voice entirely familiar to her ear—a voice that made her heart bound with a presage the most flattering, and instantly the appearance of Baron Hartfen confirmed it.

He advanced from the street on horseback: the window at which Phedora stood was open, and the eyes of the good Baron which seldom overlooked a female form, were instantly directed to her. He started,
and

and appeared to discredit the evidence of his senses, until the joyful expression of her countenance, and the inarticulate words she addressed to him, proved that it was indeed Phedora Rubenski. He threw himself hastily from his horse, and flying to the window, uttered something which meant to convey to her his astonishment and pleasure at a vision so unhopèd for.

She then found words to enquire for the Baroness; and heard that she was still at Bielsk. “But I have,” exclaimed he, “excellent news for you my dear resuscitated Phedora!—news that will delight you: and though I ardently wish to know by what means you are restored to us, I will not lose an instant in informing you, that your good Leuhaupt, and your pretty little friend Catharine, are at Warsaw.”

She clasped her hands in an ecstasy she had no thought of controlling, and uttering an exclamation of animated pleasure, “Oh, where—where are they? lead me to them!”

R 3

cried

cried she : but immediately recollecting that Alexy would be in despair at her absence, she added, “ I have a little companion in misfortune to present to them ; another poor child, yet more to be pitied than I was, when their compassion first distinguished me.”

“ Who is this ?” asked the Baron, with an emotion of surprise.

As Phedora was beginning an explanation, she was called by the attendants to fly to the wild boy, who had put the noble assemblage into the utmost confusion, and having been checked by Countess Waldowick, was roaring most vehemently for his fair favourite, who flew to him in the hope of being instantly dismissed to appease him in the anti-room, when she meant to present him to the Baron : but contrary to this expectation, she was detained by Alexy himself, who seizing her hand with an expression of joy in his countenance, led her up to the mistress of the house, who to an appearance of

of extreme old age, joined an equal display of moroseness and ill humour. This turn of aspect not being admired by him, he had amused himself for some time with standing before her, and making a variety of disapproving gestures and grimaces to the great confusion of his patroness, and the secret satisfaction of the whole company.

The Countess fearful of being implicated in the offence her young favourite was incurring, had ventured to chastise him with two or three blows, which highly raised the indignation of Alexy, and occasioned the outcry, that had called for the influence of Phedora, under whose protection he fancied he could with impunity renew the attack; and distorting his features into something like a resemblance of the object of his ridicule, he aped her attitude and motions with such a happy success, that the old lady at length discovered the meaning of his strange gambols, and glancing a look of furious indignation at Madame Waldowick, snatched up a

small fool that was placed at her feet, and threw it at the little mimic.

Phedora, who had vainly endeavoured to prevent the continuation of his offensive behaviour, saw the vindictive intentions of the irritated Pole in time to save her Alexy, by darting between him and the threatened mischief, and received a contusion on one of her temples that laid her senseless on the floor.

When she recovered, she found herself in an anti-chamber, attended by Baron Hartfen and some domestics : her head was painful and confused, and it was some minutes before she could recollect herself. Her first enquiry was then for Alexy, and a servant informed her that he had been carried off by the attendants of Countess Waldowick, notwithstanding his struggles and resistance.

“ Be

“ Be composed, my good Phedora,” said the Baron ; “ and I will conduct you immediately to your friends the Leuhaupts : I have sent for a carriage, and I expect it every minute.” She eagerly thanked him, but continued to express her solicitude for Alexy, the natural violence of whose temper, encouraged as it had been by the absurd indulgence of the Countess, would make him outrageous she feared, at their separation. Her anxiety for the child even superceded the delight she felt at the approaching meeting, so long and earnestly desired ; and to calm her mind, the Baron proposed to her, that she should enquire for her little friend at the house of Madam Waldowick, before she presented herself to the Leuhaupts.

After a short struggle between her impatience to embrace them, and her attachment to poor Alexy, she consented to the plan, and in ten minutes found herself at the gates of that mansion she had quitted a short time before, without the smallest suspicion of the good fortune that awaited her.

She was admitted with the Baron into the presence of her patroness, after some delay ; and found her extremely irritated ; for her features were swelled with rage, and her eyes gleamed with resentment. Phedora terrified at the portending storm, asked with an humble voice if she might have permission to see Alexy.

“ You have ruined me,” exclaimed Madame Waldowick, “ in the opinion of the first woman in Warsaw, by your odious folly with respect to that little detestable savage ! And at the same time I am to be told by this person whom you have viciously selected to insult me for my bounty to you, that you are not subjected to my power !”

“ I certainly told you the exact truth, Madam,” replied the Baron ; “ but I did not conduct my fair friend here to discuss that point : it was merely for the purpose of relieving you from the care of being further answerable for the blunders of the child, whom we are come to claim of you.” She
appeared

appeared excessively provoked at the cool determination with which the Baron made this requisition, and was on the point of giving way to an impulse of rage, when the fear of adding to the portion of ridicule and censure that already accrued to her from the unhappy occurrences of the morning, determined her to the double effort of suppressing her resentment, and complying with the demand.

She desired one of her attendants to produce Alexy, and ordered another to fly instantly to the offended lady, and inform her that the little brute no longer formed a part of her suite, but had been expelled the house with all the ignominy he had merited.

The Baron smiled at this forced peace-offering; but as the arrangement had not been meant for his ear, he waited in silence the appearance of Alexy, meaning to relieve Phedora immediately from the presence of one who was so little calculated as the Countess

of Waldowick, to soothe the pain her countenance gave evident symptoms of.

The poor child was at length brought in the arms of a domestic ; but he could not be persuaded to look up until the welcome voice of Phedora caught his attention : he then sprung towards her, and taking fast hold of her hand, expressed his joy and affection in a burst of tears, the first he had ever shed. She was sensibly touched with this proof of attachment, and wept with him ; but observing that his looks were directed with a mournful air to her temple, which was bound up to stop the effusion of blood which already had discoloured her hair and her cloaths, she checked her emotion, and smiled to re-assure him, whilst her words consoled him, and soon converted his apprehensions into unmixed delight.

The Baron had been much affected with their meeting ; and now happening to glance his eyes on the lady of the house, her aspect reminded

reminded him that it was highly proper to take his leave and remove from her two objects she could no longer endure the sight of with patience.

The gentleness of Phedora's temper prompted her to endeavour at least to soften the wrath of Madame Waldowick, but her efforts were ill-received; and she then followed the Baron to be conducted to those long-absent friends she so ardently wished to embrace. Alexy clinging to her with jealous eagerness, gazed earnestly at their new companion, who wished to divert the emotions of Phedora by engaging her to give some account of her little charge: but she was too much agitated to answer his enquiries with precision, and he knew very little of the history of Alexy, when his carriage stopt before a house he announced to be the dwelling of her friends. Phedora trembled, and sickening with expectation was darting forward, when the Baron entreated her to moderate her impatience, that he might apprise the good Leu-
haupts

haupts of her approach, or rather of her existence, for they were actually at that moment mourning her premature death.

He then entered the habitation, on which she gazed with increasing palpitation:—Alexy not being able to discover the cause of her emotion, partook of the pain she seemed to feel, and caressing her fondly, uttered in his own half-formed accents, the sentiments of affection she had taught him to express. She tried to listen to him, to interest herself in what he said; but her heart was too deeply agitated by the scene her imagination formed within the walls she contemplated, to succeed in the attempt.

It was some time ere the Baron re-appeared, and he was then obliged to carry her into the house: on entering it, she lost the little recollection that was left her, and the violent screams of Alexy who saw her eyes closed, and fancied she was again to be taken from him, brought Mr. Leuhaupt and Captain Lumerski

Lumerski hastily to the door. "It is Phedora herself," exclaimed the good minister: "why did you not inform us of this? But great Heaven! in what a situation!—wounded and dying—poor girl!" added he, embracing her, whilst his tears dropped upon her pale face, "what has reduced thee to this?"

The Baron endeavoured to remove his apprehension, and called to Lumerski to procure assistance: but he had darted away, the moment he had discovered in the lifeless figure presented to him, the features of Phedora.

At length her respiration returned, and she revived without that aid the Baron had vainly demanded, and gazing on Mr. Leuhaupt with a wild air for some instants, without speaking, suddenly dissolved in tears, and fobbed out the name of Catherine.

After

After a short interval of confused pleasure, Phedora enquired with more distinctness for her friend, and the good man left her to prepare his daughter for their immediate meeting. Lumeriski had however, already accomplished this task, and the next moment he led her into the room followed by her father: she rushed into the arms of her long-absent companion, the sister her heart had adopted, and Mr. Leuhaupt endeavoured in vain to soften her transports, until by pointing out to her the pallid looks of their Rubenski, her eyes dwelt with horror upon the bandage round her head, and the marks of those streams which had flowed from it: she tenderly asked the cause of all this, and Phedora contenting herself with remarking that it was occasioned by an accident, extended her hand to Lumeriski with an air of friendship and recognition; then turning to little Alexy, who regarded every one with a very solemn aspect, she recommended him to the protection of Mr. Leuhaupt, giving him a
short

short history of their first meeting in the wood of Minski, and their subsequent fellowship.

When she had succeeded in introducing her young charge to the advantageous notice of her friends, Lumerski who appeared impatient to be heard, called her attention by desiring to present to her his wife. Phedora looked surprised, and stealing a glance at Catherine, discovered by the smile that played upon her features, that Lumerski was the constant lover he had formerly manifested himself. He confirmed the surmise, and told her that all his follies had been forgiven. "Your dear little friend," added he, "even pitied the uneasiness and remorse I have been tormented with for having committed them : and now that you are restored to us, I can even bid defiance to the keen raillery of the Baroness Hartfen."

The Baron smiled, and raising his shoulders

ders expressively, seemed to intimate he was not himself quite so courageous.

Mr. Leuhaupt looking upon his children with an air of satisfaction, exclaimed, "My dear and generous Lumeriski, may the wife you chose regardless of the indigence that surrounded her, reward your disinterested affection! I have ever found her modest, gentle, patient and good—may she continue to cultivate those virtues which so well adorn her sex, and I think you will not repent the impulse that induced you to seek her hand."

Phedora then felicitating them all three with a delight too potent to be ever feigned, withdrew with Catherine, who supplied her with a change of cloaths. Alexy would not again be separated from her, and the amiable Mrs. Lumeriski, who felt interested for his desolate situation, soon obtained a large portion of his regard, by the softness of her voice and the sweetness of her countenance.

Phedora

Phedora was now at leisure to feel the inconvenience of the contusion his frolics had drawn upon her, and after Mr. Leuhaupt had examined it at her request, she found herself obliged to relinquish for the present, the society of her newly recovered friends, to endeavour to lose in repose the heavy pain that would no longer suffer her to look up.

To induce little Alexy to leave the room, Catherine quitted it herself, and prevailed with him to accompany her; but he consented with great reluctance, and when she led him to the apartment where the baron, her father and her husband still were, the child could not be amused by their united efforts, but kept his eyes perpetually fixed on the door with a look of inquietude and uneasiness, repeating imperfectly the name of Phedora Rubenski.

The Baron charmed with the sensibility he had displayed, caressed him with great fondness

fondness; and after some conversation upon the strange circumstance of his residence in the forest in an absolute state of nature, upon which each one of the party gave a separate opinion, Baron Hartfen withdrew; and Mr. Leuhaupt and Lumerski went out upon business which the appearance of Phedora had delayed.

Catherine then left alone with her little companion, felt extremely inclined to steal to the door of her friend's apartment; and endeavouring to make Alexy understand that he must be silent, she ventured to lead him there, and having listened for some time, she hoped from the stillness within, that Phedora was sleeping: but it now required every art she was mistress of to draw Alexy away again.

At length however, she succeeded in leading him to her sitting room, but he still continued extremely dissatisfied, and whilst she
was

was trying to sooth him, Cassimir Rectzizi entered.

After the usual salutations, he enquired whose child she was playing with: and Catherine very much embarrassed in what manner to break to him the discovery that Phedora still existed, hesitated for a reply. He had heard the circumstances of her supposed death very minutely related by Baron Hartfen, who had been too much occupied with his own regrets, when he first met Cassimir at Warsaw, to miss so favorable an opportunity of bewailing with this young man, who must he thought feel some interest for so amiable a creature, a fate so cruel and untimely. The effect of his intelligence, imparted to him a secret which the baroness had carefully preserved from his knowledge, and the good baron now no longer wondered at Ivan's want of success.

The air of deep melancholy which Rectzizi wore, was far from prepossessing
Alexy

Alexy in his favor, who fearing that the stranger was come to deprive him of his friend, as the Baron had done, run to the door, and renewed his cries for Phedora Rubenski. Catherine hastily followed and drew him back, but he looked up in her face with a mien of entreaty, and pointing still to the door repeated the words.—“What does he say?” cried Cassimir with eager emotion, “who does he ask for?”—“I cannot quite understand him,” replied she, blushing at the falsehood she pronounced.

Alexy then in a fit of impatience, uttered the words so distinctly that Rectzizi started, and with a varying cheek exclaimed, “He calls for Phedora—our dear ill-fated Rubenski!” The boy alarmed at his agitation, now struggled to free himself from the distressed Catherine, when the door was opened by Phedora, who had accidentally removed the bandage from her temple, and being awakened by the blood that trickled
from

from it, had risen to procure the assistance of Mrs. Lumerski to replace it.

She found herself extremely faint as she entered the room, and unable to articulate, pointed to her head to explain her request and sunk upon a chair which was near her, without observing the presence of Cassimir, who seemed petrified with astonishment and a mixed transport of rapture and horror.

Catherine flew to support her, and anxiously desired Rectzizi to assist her in binding up the wound. Roused from his stupor by these words, he advanced hastily, and with hands that shook from violent emotion, obeyed though with difficulty her directions, whilst she sustained the drooping head of her almost insensible friend.

Mrs. Lumerski then in a low voice, conjured him to withdraw for the present, and send her female servant to aid her in conducting Phedora to her apartment. Cassimir
sighed

sighed, but assented to this request, after having vainly endeavoured to carry off Alexy, who importuned the invalid with his anxious fondness.

He left the room without having been recognised by her, in an agony of suspense ; and instantly quitted the house to procure the medical assistance she appeared so much to require.

Having sent to her a military surgeon of eminent skill, he walked to and fro near the habitation until Mr. Leuhaupt and Lumeriski returned. They greeted him with very different sensations : the former fearing that his renewed addresses would stagger the resolution of his yet irreproachable Phedora, and draw upon her the displeasure of her benefactors : for Cassimir had himself related to the good man all that had passed at Moscow

Lumeriski

Lumerski on the contrary, felt no reluctance to expedite by every service in his power, the happiness of his friend, which he sincerely hoped and trusted would now be completed.

The alarming account given by Cassimir, terrified them both, and as they entered the house, they assailed the surgeon who was on the point of quitting it, with the most hurried and anxious inquiries: he soon restored tranquility however, by giving them to understand that the apprehensions of Rectzizi were much more acute than the occasion required.

In a short time Catherine appeared, attended by Alexy; and she confirmed the assurances of the surgeon that her friend was much recovered. "I have left her," Mrs. Lumerski added, "that she may repose without any interruption from this child, whose affection is too restless to allow her the

quiet at present so necessary : but Martha watches by her."

Cassimir now enquired who this Alexy was ; and receiving from Mr. Leuhaupt the little narrative Phedora had given him, he caressed the boy very tenderly for the attachment he had so evidently felt for her, and because he was equally dear to his fair friend.

Catherine meantime, in compassion to the ardent inclination he could not conceal, to learn something more of Phedora, explained to him the manner in which she had been restored to them, but of the wound she could only inform him in her own words, that it was an accident, as she had not been present at the discovery the Baron had made, of her having received it to save the unlucky Alexy for whom the favor had been intended. Lumerki subjoined this account to the slight one his wife had given ; and Cassimir shuddered with indignation and horror, upon the reflexion which instantly occurred, of
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what might have been the extent of the mischief.

On the following day Phedora was so much better, that she could enjoy without inconvenience the society of her friends: yet when she regarded with satisfaction the good Mr. Leuhaupt and Catherine, the idea of that excellent woman who had filled the situation of wife, of mother and of friend, with a conduct so endearing and worthy of admiration, pressed upon her heart with irresistible force. Catherine read in her expressive countenance the regret that occupied her mind, and easily divining the cause of it, turned with a sigh which Mr. Leuhaupt echoed. Lumerski would not however, suffer them to dwell long on images of sorrow, and engaged Phedora to relate all that had befallen her, which her Livonian friends had not gathered from the Baron, Cassimir, and himself.

Phedora, ever willing to gratify the wishes of those she loved, endeavoured to arrange in her memory the eventful peregrinations she had gone through; but Mr. Leuhaupt kindly delayed the narrative until her strength was quite re-established, and her recollection better able to assist her, than in the first days of a re union which afforded them all a delight so potent.

Phedora was very thankful for a consideration she found extremely welcome; and it was consented to on both sides, that any retrospection should be avoided for a short time.

Alexy was now in his usual spirits, and with a little assistance from his beloved friend, could make some very articulate replies to the questions his new companions occasionally asked him; nor did he forget on his part to entreat Mrs. Lumerfski to sing to him, who became so wonderful a favorite upon her good humoured and repeated compliance
with

with this request, that she almost rivalled Phedora in his esteem: her father and Lumerski too, received some proofs of a growing regard, and the boy was so much pleased with his situation, that his lively activity, by which he generally demonstrated satisfaction, compelled even the smiling attention of Mr. Leuhaupt.

Baron Hartfen with assiduous friendship called early in the day, to enquire if Phedora continued mending; and having convinced himself of it by her altered appearance, he congratulated her very zealously upon the termination of her acquaintance with the absurd Madame Waldowick, who had not, he said, received any benefit from her publication of the dismissal of poor Alexy, and had thought proper to quit Warsaw yet more hastily than she had entered it, in a fit of mortified vanity.

After a few comments upon the conduct of this woman, whose actions, whose mind,

whose whole existence was governed by considerations the most despicably puerile, the conversation turned insensibly to the residence of Alexy in a desert place, where they concluded he must of necessity have been accustomed to obtain sustenance without assistance or tuition, and have been indebted most wonderfully to instinct, for preservation from those dangers that surrounded him in a variety of forms.

Phedora and her friend withdrew from the discussion, and Catherine in a low voice informed her, that she must not be surprised to behold another person enquiring soon after a welfare so precious to them all.

“ Whom do you mean ? ” cried Phedora blushing: “ shall I have the pleasure of meeting my good Ivan here ? ”

“ No,” replied his sister, “ he was obliged to quit us at Moscow, where we learnt your unremitting cruelty to him. Be not alarmed.”

ed," added she, "I am not blaming you,—but I spoke of one more favoured than poor Ivan."

Phedora replied not, yet her eyes earnestly demanded a confirmation of the surmises the words of Mrs. Lumerski had given rise to.

"I will not tease you," continued she smiling: "I mean the amiable Rectzizi, who yesterday participated in the delightful discovery we had so recently made, and saw his dear ill-fated Rubenski whilst he was lamenting her loss."

"Saw me!" exclaimed Phedora, in a tremor.

Catherine then explained what had passed; but her friend could scarcely credit that she had indeed entered a room where Cassimir Rectzizi was, without being conscious of his presence.

"And did he indeed express any solicitude for the ill-fated Rubenski?" she asked

asked in a low but animated tone : " Ah, Catherine, the last time I saw him, he appeared indifferent at best, if not disgusted with me."

" I heard of that interview," replied Mrs. Lumerski : " he informed me that he was very angry with you."

" I thought so!" exclaimed Phedora : " What had I then done to excite his displeasure?"

" He shall himself tell you," said Catherine smiling : " but now that my father is too much engaged to defend you, I shall call you to a strict account, for not enquiring minutely into our destiny when you met poor Rectzizi at Moscow."

" He would never give me an opportunity," replied she, in extreme confusion : " yet I own you appear to have great reason in accusing me of ingratitude and a negligence unpardonable, that I suffered him to remain so long at intervals under the same roof, without seeking in defiance of the eagerness

eagerness with which he ever fled me, for a more particular information of the situation of those dear friends who must ever retain the first place in my heart. And now that the reproach I have so justly deserved, is most bitterly felt, let me not aggravate it, by neglecting to express all the interest I have experienced for the fate of the Stenaus, and my wishes to hear that they are not unhappy."

"They are at peace," said Catherine gravely: "they did not long survive their anxieties, and those severities Rectzizi could not protect us from,—but hush! I am disobeying my father's request!"

"And could I indeed be so insensible," exclaimed Phedora, "as to listen to any scruples, or think any reason a sufficient one, that withheld me from an opportunity of commiserating your unhappy destiny, though I could not alleviate or share it."

The tone of regret in which she spoke, drew the attention of Mr. Leuhaupt, who

called upon his daughter to spare their little friend for the present: and whilst he was uttering the injunction, Cassimir Rectzizi entered the room, and hastening to Phedora, took her hand, and enquired with eager concern if he might congratulate her friends upon her convalescence. She was unable to make any reply, and as her countenance varied and was marked with distress, Alexy run towards her and with a look of reproach directed to Rectzizi, endeavoured to push him away, because he regarded his presence as the cause of it. The Baron who appeared singularly pleased with the child, caught him up in his arms, and a little contest ensued between them, during which Phedora struggled to overcome her emotion. Mr. Leuhaupt observed it, and addressed himself to Cassimir to assist the effort: but his attention could not be diverted from the fair object of his solicitude, and he repeated his question in a different form.

"I can neither feel illness nor inquietude," replied Phedora timidly, "in the society I am in: and when I have beheld the Count and Countess Rectzizi, and embraced the good Baroness and your amiable sister, what can I have further to wish! but I have letters," she added hastily, "from the Count your brother, who foreseeing as little as myself the happy protection that awaited me here, generously furnished me with recommendations not only to his own family, but to others who are, I have been informed, absent from Warsaw."

"Where had my brother the happiness of meeting you?" asked Cassimir.

When Phedora had replied, Mr. Leuhaupt enquired when he expected his family at Warsaw?

"I know not," replied he; "but I should imagine they will be in the imperial train."

"Phedora," cried the Baron suddenly, "you must not fail to recollect the claim which your little friend Madame Hartsen

will make upon you. the moment she arrives here: remember the uneasiness she has suffered, and resolve to console her, by reassuming the situation in our family, from which you was so fearfully precipitated."

"Are you already seducing my beloved companion from me?" exclaimed Catherine: "believe me I will not part with her, and I shall have the temerity to oppose my wishes to those of the Baroness, if she should have the cruelty to require such a sacrifice?"

Lumerski seconded this assertion, and Cassimir secretly hoped she would support it, because he was persuaded that both Catherine and her husband would favour his partiality to Phedora, whilst the Baroness he knew, would act in conformity to the inclinations of his mother and the Count.

Mr. Leuhaupt was silent; but, observing the eyes of Phedora turned upon him with an air of anxious enquiry, 'I am charmed,' said he, 'that the amiable disposition of our
little

little Rubenski has secured her the friends she so well merits : for I am sure she will never forfeit their esteem, and in that case I am equally certain they will never withdraw it from her. Thus when you my good Catharine must follow the fortunes of your husband, and be perhaps unable to offer her an asylum under your roof, because you must yourself quit it, and I, enclosed in the grave to which every man of threescore may consider himself as hastening, she will still find herself beloved, valued and protected. Let us rejoice, my child, in this consideration, and to its influence give up all selfish and momentary gratification.'

A silence of some minutes ensued : the tears dropped upon the cheeks of Phedora, and Catharine could not subdue the air of disappointment that spread over her features : whilst the Baron, who had not expected so serious a discussion, had recourse to Alexy to dispel the gravity he had unintentionally been the cause of; and the noisy mirth and

wild merriment of the child restored a degree of gaiety to every countenance. Cassimir however, understood and extremely disapproved the purport of Mr. Leuhaupt's speech, yet he was silent; and when Lumeriski was compelled by indispensable business to leave his guests, he accompanied him to have the consolation of speaking of Phedora, and listening to every circumstance of her story Lumeriski had been able to learn, since he had parted from her on the borders of Luthuania.

The explanation which had passed there, and the account Phedora had given of her last conversation with the altered Rectzizi, had been repeated to him by his friend, and when compared with the information Cassimir had extracted from the Baron, had entirely dissipated the mistaken ideas he had formed of the enviable fortune of Ivan, and explained what had appeared to him so insulting an avowal of her partiality in his favour. Still however, Rectzizi had complained

plained of her want of solicitude to remove the error he had been led into, when he had met her at Moscow: for he asserted, that had she felt anxiety for the conduct resulting from it, it would have induced her to colour the explanation she wished to promote, by seeking to converse with him on a subject which he knew lay very near her heart.—“ But she chose rather,” argued Cassimir, “ to forego the appearance of the strong interest she really took in the fate of the excellent Leuhaupts, than provide me with an opportunity of hearing what would have subdued all my anger, and ended the uneasiness that preyed upon my mind.”

Lumeriski here reminded him, that he had industriously avoided her society, and shunned her conversation: a circumstance he could not deny; yet he would not entirely forgive Phedora for not procuring his sister to hint to him his error, which he fancied she was acquainted with, and still suffered him to remain in. But the melancholy

choly tidings, which soon reached him, through the Baron, of her supposed death, converted every sentiment into deep regret, and the bitterest sorrow; his only satisfaction then consisted in reviewing with Mrs. Lumerski those endearing qualifications their lamented Rubenski had so eminently possessed; and even the prudence of Mr. Leuhaupt had no further check to oppose to his fond and fruitless admiration.

Madame Hartfen had been detained at Bielsk by a severe indisposition, the consequence of her uneasiness and regret; here Jalgurouki left her, and joined the Baron in Podolia, to whom he related the untimely fate of the admired Phedora. The Baroness, on her recovery, meant to have travelled to Warsaw, to fix her present residence there, and meet her husband, whose head quarters were then in the capital; but learning from him that he had become acquainted with the Leuhaupts through Lumerski, who was immediately under his command, she retracted
her

her intention, because she could not endure the sight of Phedora's friends, who had, she said, so just a right to censure her with the utmost severity.

This was the situation in which Phedora found them, when the Baron rescued her from the tyranny of Madame Waldowick: and though her appearance gave Mr. Leuhaupt the sincerest and most animated pleasure, he felt apprehensive lest Cassimir should influence her to disregard the inclinations of the Count and Countess Restzizi, by yielding to his solicitations, which he naturally concluded would now be the more vehement from the recent anguish he had endured for her supposed loss. Mr. Leuhaupt resolved however, to enforce the wishes of Phedora's benefactors, by his own counsel and opposition to the entreaties of their son, however painful the task, and averse he might be from making two young people uneasy whom he regarded with an affection entirely parental. He was sensible too, that in acting thus, he
should

should have to combat the opinions of his daughter and her husband, who peculiarly feeling the happiness resulting from their own union, of which the sincerest affection was the basis, very naturally found themselves interested to promote that of their young friends.

When Cassimir so eagerly followed Lumer-ski out, Mr. Leuhaupt very rightly guessed what would form the subject of their conversation: he was too just to blame with asperity those hopes and those projects he could not however approve, but he resolved to exert his utmost vigilance to render them abortive.

His reflections upon this subject were so profound, that he distinguished not the riotous frolics of Alexy and his play-fellow the Baron, who was so much delighted with the society he had fallen into, that having lengthened his morning visit beyond the accustomed time, he accepted the invitation of Mrs. Lumer-ski, and gave up the luxurious indulgences

gences of his own table, to partake of her more sober meal.

When Lumerski returned home, he was still accompanied by Cassimir, and the whole party then passed the remainder of the day together. Phedora forgot all the misery she had endured, in the gentle satisfaction that stole over her heart: and Mr. Leuhaupt insensibly dismissed for the present, his scrupulous fears, when he contemplated the happy countenances which surrounded him. Alexy was by no means the least charmed of the set: he talked with confused volubility, attempted to sing, and capered with such a variety of active gestures, that the Baron was in raptures with the agility and strength he exhibited.

Phedora was called upon to relate their first meeting, and the mutual ceremonials of introduction practised by the Minski foresters; and having satisfied the minute curiosity of Baron Hartsen, she was then compelled

compelled to sing the little Polish air, which had secured her little captive. It was a favourite canzonet Ulmeri had learnt of her brother Cassimir, and he could not conceal the delight he experienced on hearing it warbled by Phedora; but his transports could not exceed those of Alexy, whose faculties seemed tuned by nature to an extraordinary sensibility of the magic of harmonious sounds.

“Madame Hartsen will be charmed with this child,” exclaimed the Baron, turning to Phedora.

“I have likewise thought so,” returned she: “but when am I to be so happy as to embrace the dear the amiable Baronefs—can you not inform me?”

“I did intend,” said he, “to surprise you by presenting her to this good family without any previous notice; but as you attack me so directly upon this point, I believe I must disclose to you that I should not be much astonished to see her at Warsaw to-morrow night, or the day following: for I sent

sent the intelligence that will give her such infinite satisfaction the moment I discovered it myself—indeed before I quitted the house where my good destiny directed me so fortunately, to find you: and you are, my pretty Phedora unluckily too well convinced of her impetuosity in travelling, not to be persuaded that no obstacle will prevent her from pressing forward night and day to be assured that my information is not fictitious—though I took the precaution to send upon this mission, one of my attendants who had beheld you as well as myself.’

“ And shall I indeed see her so soon!” exclaimed Phedora: “ misfortune appears now no longer pursuing me —.”

A sigh from Rectzizi checked her effusion, and the good of which she was boasting seemed imperfect, since he could not take an equal share in it.

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